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Cover Photo by Neil Zlozower/Atlas Icons

NEIL ZLOZOWER/ATLASICONS

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LOWDOWN

BRIAN FOX

Party Time: Excellent

I TELL YOU WHAT, OUR FRIENDS AT *REVOLVER* KNOW HOW TO THROW ONE helluva hootenanny. At the 5th Annual Golden Gods Awards in downtown Los Angeles, the hard rock faithful came out in force to bang their heads at what host Chris Jericho called "The Antichrist of Awards Shows." Armed with a photo pass and jacked up on a potentially lethal cocktail of adrenalin and energy drink, I happily hit the "black carpet" at the evening's opening festivities. David Ellefson, Rob Trujillo, Jason Newsted, Frank Bello, Rob Blasko (who contributed this month's cover story), Rudy Sarzo, Rex Brown, and Lemmy Kilmister were but a few of the bassists to walk the walk, pausing gamely to throw devil horns at the horde of photographers gathered.

Upstairs in the VIP lounge (yeah, you know how I roll), the hang got even heavier, with the aforementioned lords of the low end rubbing shoulders and pounding fists with the likes of Jack Black, MMA superstar Chuck Liddell, and Alice Cooper. When Gene Simmons unceremoniously strolled into the room, I knew the night was *on*.

After a few pleasantries from the Club Nokia stage, Anthrax lit a fire that would burn thought the night, fanning the flames with a guest spot by Rex Brown. Literally breathing fire and raining blood on the stage (from an injury sustained in his unhinged stagedive entrance), Dillinger Escape Plan front man Greg Puciato tore into the audience with a set powered by tunes from the band's new album. You'll be seeing more of DEP bassist Liam Wilson, who anchored the insanity around him, in the September issue of BP. Halestorm and Five Finger Death Punch—with Josh Smith and Chris Kael on bass, respectively—cranked the energy ever higher. Johny Chow with Stone Sour and Steve Zing with Danzig kept the crazy train on its tracks until headliners Metallica, powered by the indomitable Robert Trujillo, finally tore the roof off the place.

Major kudos to the *Revolver* crew for a killer show, and thanks for the hookup. And now, I'm off to see my audiologist.

Robert Trujillo (left) and Metallica.

Lemmy Kilmister (left) and Phil Campbell of Motörhead walk the "black carpet" at the Revolver Golden Gods Awards. Lemmy strolled home later that night with this year's Paul Gray Best Bassist Award.

Got a light? The Dillinger Escape Plan bringing the heat.

COURT OF OPINION

What's your go-to lick when checking out a new bass?

Join the conversation at facebook.com/bassplayermag.

It's the "slow chromatic run up the entire fingerboard on each string." Not the most exciting thing to hear, but pretty good for making sure the frets and intonation are accurate.
—Zak Claxton

Playing "Higher Ground" in the bass section is like a guitarist playing "Stairway to Heaven."
—Clay Smith

Whatever makes me look cooler than the guitar player noodling next to me. God, I hate music stores.
—Dave Johnston

The *Barney Miller* theme.
—Jake Istre

I like to start off with a little "Smoke on the Water," bust into "I Love You" by Barney, and then segue into a slap rendition of "Happy Birthday"—but no "Stairway"! **—Mark Pappas**

Rush's "Vital Signs" from start to finish.
—Nicholas Demetriou

"Sir Duke" by Stevie Wonder.
—J. Peter Ross

"Come On, Come Over."
—Blazej Domanski

"I Want You Back." .
—Joe Hall

"YYZ."
—Graham Drew

Pink Floyd's "Money." .
—Greg Gross

"Silly Putty," "Continuum," "Teen Town," "Hit Me With Your Rhythm Stick," "Mellowship Slinky in B Major," and "Tommy the Cat" are some faves. But if the amp's got a gain channel, it's hard to resist a little "Hysteria."
—Jay Babies

TIMELINE

This Month In Bass: July

1st Blues god Willie Dixon born, **1915**. Steppenwolf bassist Rushton Moreve dies in a motorcycle accident, **1981**.

2nd Noel Redding quits the Jimi Hendrix Experience, **1968**.

6th Bill Evans bassist Scott LaFaro killed in an auto accident at age 25, **1961**. James Brown goes to No. 2 on the U.S. album chart with *Live at the Apollo*, featuring the wicked grooves of bass man Hubert Perry, **1963**.

7th Miles Davis sideman and solo star Michael Henderson born, **1951**.

9th Paul McCartney and Wings play their first gig, **1972**.

13th West Coast jazz giant Leroy Vinnegar born, **1928**. Geezer Butler and Black Sabbath play their first gig, **1968**. New York Dolls bassist Arthur "Killer" Kane dies, **2004**.

14th Session vet Scott Edwards' groovin' line helps Donna Summer reach No. 1 with "Bad Girls," **1979**.

16th Jack Bruce, Ginger Baker, and Eric Clapton form Cream, **1966**.

17th L.A. studio bass king Abraham Laboriel born, **1947**. Black Sabbath's Geezer Butler born, **1949**. Musical director Aston "Family Man" Barrett and the Wailers back Bob Marley for the first of two shows later released as the *Live!* album, **1975**.

18th Billy Joel's "It's Still Rock & Roll to Me," armed with Doug Stegmeyer's killer line, rules the charts, **1980**.

19th Glenn Hughes and the rest of Deep Purple call it a day, **1976**.

21st Roger Waters kicks off *The Wall* at the Berlin Wall, **1990**.

25th Bob Dylan, backed by Jerome Arnold and other members of the Butterfield Blues Band, goes electric at the Newport Folk Festival, **1965**.

26th Randy Meisner's catchy bass line on the title track helps take the Eagles' *One of These Nights* to No. 1, **1975**.

27th Paul Young's "Everytime You Go Away," a showcase for Pino Palladino's fretless StingRay, hits No. 1, **1983**. Lynyrd Skynyrd bassist Leon Wilkeson dies, **2001**.

28th Fusion/contemporary jazz luminary Gerald Veasley born, **1955**.

29th Rush icon and Rock & Roll Hall of Fame member Geddy Lee born, **1953**.

31st James Taylor, backed by Lee Sklar and other L.A. session heavies, hits the top of the U.S. charts with "You've Got a Friend," **1971**.

THE REAL WORLD

Dan Foster

Home base Chesapeake, Virginia
Occupation Part-time musician
Basses Ibanez Soundgear, Steinberger L2, 1976 Fender Precision, fretless Fender Squier Jazz Bass
Rig Gallien-Krueger Backline 600 through a Flite 4x10 cab, Genz-Benz Shuttle 6.2, Carvin MB10 Micro Bass 1x10 (for solo practice)
Effects MXR Bass Auto Q, Visual Sound H20 chorus/echo
Strings Elixir, Rotosound Swing Bass
Heroes & inspiration Too many to list, but here are the top of the crop: John Entwistle, the man who first made me want to play bass; Paul McCartney; Billy Sheehan; Victor Wooten; Stanley Clarke; and John Paul Jones
Contact studioxmusic.com

How did you come to play bass?

I always had a deep love for music. With four older brothers and two older sisters in my family, there was always a lot of great music in the air. I didn't start playing until I was 20—I wanted to learn an instrument, and I mistakenly thought that it would be easier to learn an instrument with four strings as opposed to six. Being that I have a natural sense of groove, however, it worked out okay. When I heard John Entwistle doing his solo spots on "My Generation" and "The Real Me," that sealed the deal. I knew then that bass had a cool factor and could be an outlet for creative originality.

What's a lesson you've learned along the way?

Show up to gigs and rehearsals early (or at least on time). Know the material, play in the pocket and for the song, conduct yourself in a professional manner, be reliable, always help with load-in and load-out, don't overindulge in alcohol (even if it's free), and stay away from drugs. Lawyers are expensive, and brain cells don't grow back.

What are your musical goals?

To switch over to playing music full time this year. I just need to find the right people to work with, so if you know a band or artist that needs a bassist, give me a shout! My label, Studio X Music, sells and licenses music from projects I've been a part of over the years, either as a bassist or producer. And I'm really excited about finishing *Jazz X*, a three-year recording project with my good friend Brian Wohlschlegel. We shared the bass duties, although Brian—an outstanding bassist and engineer—did most of the bass lines. I did a few bass tracks and produced the CD.

Want to introduce yourself? Find submission guidelines at bassplayer.com/realworld. Get selected for The Real World and receive a set of D'Addario EXL170 bass strings and a T-shirt. All those who submit wil receive D'Addario's FretBuzz newsletter.

DIG MY RIG!

MY BASSES, LEFT TO RIGHT, BEGIN WITH AN ESP LTD 6-string with active electronics and upgraded Hipshot bridge; it's strung from a low *F#* (with a .175-gauge string) to *G*. Next is a custom Rickenbacker 4003 5-string with EMG-HZ pickups, a Hipshot bridge, and Pickguardian pickguard pieces. Then there's a Westone Pantera 5-string with new EMG pickups and a BQS system, plus Schaller hardware. All the way to the right is my Warmoth Gecko 5-string, also with EMG electronics and Schaller hardware. I plug them all into Mesa Boogie Standard PowerHouse 2x12 and 2x15 cabinets.

In my rack, I have a Tech 21 VT Bass 1000 amp, Ashley PQX-571 7-band parametric EQ, DigiTech Bass Harmony Machine, Alesis Midiverb 4, dbx 160XT compressor/limiter, two-space rack drawer, Hush IIBX noise gate, Korg Toneworks rack tuner, and a Furman PL-Plus power conditioner. I have one space left at the top for a future wireless system (I've got my eye on the Line 6 G90). On the floor is my Tech 21 amp footswitch and my Markbass Super Synth pedal. —BILL RIDNER

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EXPO

Mumford & Sun

As the sun sets, the heat rises with Mumford & Sons bringing their folk-rock trip to the great outdoors. For more on bass man Ted Dwane, flip to page 22.

DREW GURIAN

BASS NOTES

THE BAND PERRY

Reid Perry Neo-Nashvillian Nose

BY BRIAN FOX

IN THE MASHED-UP, MIXED-UP WORLD OF contemporary country music, you're nowadays just as likely to see inked-up heshers slinging Les Pauls as you are to see buttoned-up gents sporting Stetsons and a smile. The savvy new generation of Nashville knows there's more to country music than fiddles and twang. It's an outlook that comes naturally to Reid Perry, who, along with his sister Kimberly and brother Neil, makes up the chart-topping Band Perry. The band is currently touring to support its latest, *Pioneer*.

How does the band generally write tunes?

Often times, we'll write with Kimberly on acoustic guitar, me on bass, and Neil on mandolin. We actually arrange the songs as we're writing them, because we have those core instruments all going. Then we'll take those songs and play them in soundcheck with our [touring] band. That way, we'll have a good idea of the arrangement before we get into the studio, and I'll already have come up with my bass part. There's always in-the-moment creativity in the studio—I'll add a new part here or there. But for the most part, it's pre-arranged.

What's your approach in terms of tracking?

I'll lay a track down with the band, and then I'll go back and scope it to see if there's something I want to do differently, Sometimes, I'm completely happy with the tracks, and we'll just leave it the way it is. On *Pioneer*, we worked with [producer] Dan Huff, who's a musician, himself. So it was nice to have his extra ears on the tracks.

In Nashville, it's common practice to use studio players for a band's record, though you were clearly the one out on the road. For example, Chris Chaney and Michael Rhoads played on The Band Perry's 2010 self-titled debut.

They did—they played on about five tracks, and I played on the rest of the album. That's the way that Nashville is. What we love about studio musicians is that they literally make it a 9-to-5 job, and it's a lot of the bread and butter of the Nashville scene. And we'll take some of those studio players out on the road with us, as well. We love the studio musicians, but we are a band, and it's important to have our sounds on the records. We may not be the best technical players, but we have our own unique way of playing.

Did anybody else contribute bass tracks on ?

No, it's all me.

That's a bit of an anomaly for a country record coming out of Nashville.

It is, but country music is becoming a very broad genre, and we're using a lot of different methods to make records. It depends on what you need. One thing we've always said amongst ourselves, whether it comes to writing the songs or picking the players, is that we have to make sure the music is what comes first. I feel like we've done a pretty good job putting aside all ego and pride to make sure music is what takes the lead.

The studio and the stage are definitely different arenas. Do you have to modify the bass lines you've recorded when you take it to the stage?

Definitely. On the recorded version of "Done," for example, there's a swing to the chorus, and I'm pounding away at eighth notes. Live, we straighten it out to a four-on-the-floor feel, and I'll just hit quarter notes on the downbeats, throwing in a run here or there to give it a little accent.

One difference between the first album and this album is that we're playing bigger rooms now. On the first album, I played more intricate parts, just because people could hear it in the small theaters and clubs we were playing. That kind of stuff doesn't translate as well in amphitheaters and arenas. You almost have to dumb it down just for people to be able to hear your ideas.

How would you describe your playing style?

I like a lot of movement on bass. We grew up playing as a three-piece, with Kimberly on electric guitar and Neil on drums. We didn't really have a lead guitar, so I added a lot of the melody to what we were doing.

What are you looking for in your tone?

I like a round-sounding bass, but I like my bass tone to have a bit of a nose—some mids and high end. Melodic lines can get lost when the tone is too round. I don't really use distortion, but I like adding a bit of dirt to the sound, usually by boosting the gain a little bit. I always play through the overdrive (VINTAGE) channel on the Super Bassman head. It gives me that little bit of grit to push through. There are times when I want to add even more dirt, but I haven't yet found the right pedal. I currently have a ZVex Woolly Mammoth, but the songs we're currently playing live don't really call for it.

You seem to prefer P-Basses, but you also play a Gretsch White Falcon. Do you find that it's tricky dialing in the tone of a hollowbody bass on stage?

That has been the hardest one to wrangle. P-Basses sound great no matter what they're plugged into, but it's taken a bit of work to get the Gretsch sounding the way we want it. It's a

beast. It's not as punchy as the P-Basses, so I generally use it on ballads.

Do you use standard tuning on your basses?

I have one standard, one with everything down a half step, and one with all strings down a whole step.

How do you like your basses set up?

I play really hard, so I have super high action.

When you were first learning to play bass, whom did you look to?

I'm a huge Stones and Beatles fan, but for opposite reasons. I love Paul McCartney's melodies. I remember listening when I was little and assessing what he did. He was the first player I heard that would play the fifth when everybody else was sitting on the root. I didn't know why, but I knew I liked the way that sounded. With Bill Wyman, I loved the holes that he would leave in the music. Often, people will play just to fill up space. But a better bass player knows when *not* to play.

Growing up, I also listened to a lot of Stevie Wonder. I'd play what his left hand was doing on keyboard. I didn't even know it was keyboards, not bass, but I'd learn those parts. I also had a big book of tuba music, so I'm sure I got some ideas from that, as well. **BP**

INFO

LISTEN

The Band Perry, *Pioneer* [Republic Nashville, 2013]

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Words & Music With Leonard Cohen

BY CHRIS JISI

IT'S ONE OF THE MORE SURREAL SCENES IN the live music spectrum: 20,000 fans are packed into New York's Madison Square Garden for a late-winter Leonard Cohen concert, yet the arena is as hushed as a jazz club, as the crowd clings to Cohen's every lamenting lyric. The setting also reveals his band's depth and discernment, with not a wasted or throwaway note heard all evening long. Leading the ten-piece unit on Cohen's 2013 Old Ideas world tour—which boasts such vets as keyboardist Neil Larsen, guitarist Mitch Watkins, and vocalist Sharon Robinson—is Roscoe Beck. While perhaps best known for backing guitar gods Robben Ford, Eric Johnson, Greg Koch, and Oz Noy, Beck has a producing and playing history that extends from his longtime work with Cohen to like-minded tunesmiths Jennifer Warnes, Joe Ely, Beth Nielsen Chapman, and the Dixie Chicks. Backstage, Roscoe reflected on his role for rock's deep-voiced poet of pessimism and despair.

What are your responsibilities as Leonard's musical director?

Upon getting the call in 2007 for my second stint as his musical director, my first responsibilities were to catalog the songs we were considering performing, and to help him audition and assemble the touring band. Once the band was in place, we began to assemble the arrangements, as a unit. Each member has contributed in that regard, and the arrangement work continues as the tour rolls along. Quite often a song we've been playing for years will suddenly undergo a key change or an entirely new treatment. Onstage, my job is something like a "stealth" conductor: The better I do it, the less one might notice it. I take verbal instructions or cues from Leonard and pass them along, as subtly as possible, to the rest of the band. I have to be on my toes at all times; anything is possible. For instance, Leonard might decide to wait until coming in with a verse if it feels like the organic thing to do. Arrangements are not set in stone; it's very much a "heads up" gig.

How would you describe your role and your approach as the bassist?

My bass role is that of a musical leader, if you will, as almost all of the cues come through me. But musically, my approach is very simple. The bass parts must be reliable and leave space. With Leonard, it's all about the lyrics and the vocal. If Leonard's words aren't heard, we've failed in our duty. It's not a "player's gig" per se, especially for the bassist. My job on bass is to remain disciplined, to remain appropriate and respectful to the music.

What's the greatest challenge of the gig for you?

Remaining vigilant! No matter how many times we may have played a particular song, anything about that song could change, at any time—and probably will! Remaining focused and in the moment is always important, but on this gig, it is absolutely essential. Another challenge is singing background vocals. In the role of bassist I'm usually comfortable and confident, so onstage I often focus more on the challenge of my vocal parts, doing my best to ensure they're in pitch and blending well. Overall, if my performance never stands out in a particularly obvious way, I'm probably doing my job well. **BP**

INFO

LISTEN

Roscoe Beck, *Walk On* [Waterloo, 2005]; Leonard Cohen, *Old Ideas* [BMG, 2012], *Songs From the Road* [Sony, 2010]; Garrett Lebeau, *Rise to the Grind* [Music Road, 2013]; Oz Noy, *Twisted Blues, Vol. 1* [Abstract Logix, 2011]; Eric Johnson, *Up Close* [Capitol, 2010]

EQUIP

Basses Three Fender Roscoe Beck 5-strings (one fretless), early-1900s Pfretschner German flatback; 1930s Schroetter German carved back
Strings Electric, La Bella Hard Rockin' Steels; upright, Thomastik Weich
Rig Barbera Transducer Systems pickup (for upright), Fender Bassman 250 head, AxeTrak ATB 0001 isolation cabinet, Ultimate Ears UE18 in-ear monitors (in one ear only)
Effects TC Electronic 1210 Spatial Expander + Stereo Chorus/Flanger, Lexicon MPX-1 Stereo Processor (for reverb only), Radial JDI Passive Direct Box

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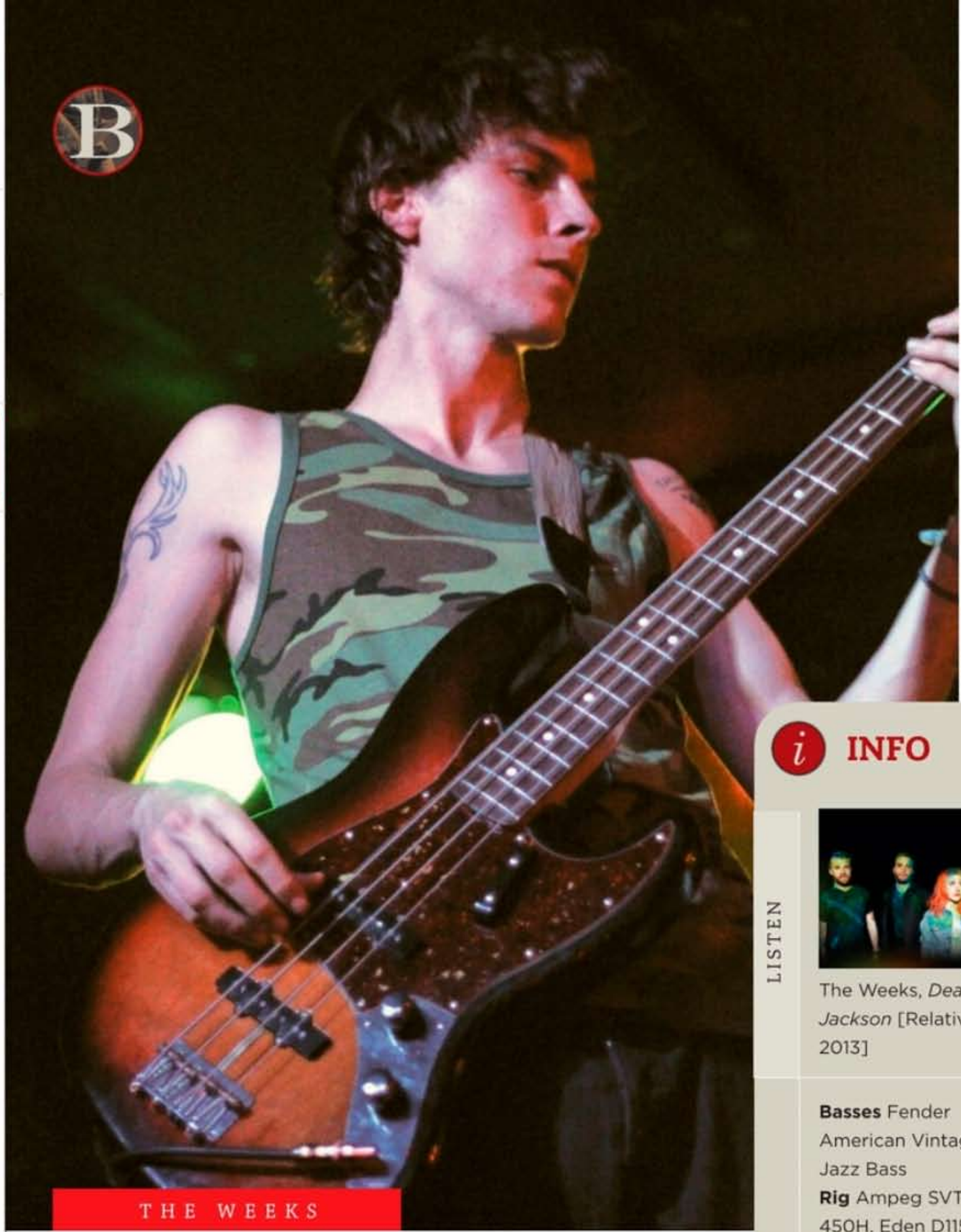


JIMMY LESLIE

THE WEEKS

Damien "Dee" Bone

Goin' Mobile

BY JIMMY LESLIE

DAMIEN "DEE" BONE IS A MAN ON THE MOVE. BOUNCING all over the stage with the Weeks, his scissors-like fingerstyle work creates perpetual motion. The wiry young Mississippian will hunker down on a particularly straightforward tune—he certainly plays closer to the vest in the studio—but even a quick listen to the Weeks' new CD, *Dear Bo Jackson*, reveals considerable kinetic energy coming from the bass player in the unique Southern alternative ensemble.

"King-Sized Death Bed" is a fine example of your bass line propelling the Weeks. How did it come about?

That song actually started with the bass line, which is unusual. Sam [guitarist Sammy D] and I watched a documentary about Buddy Holly that inspired the bass line, and the song took off from there. I also hear a country influence, which surely comes from living in Nashville for the past few years. The rhythm section is straightforward and soft. I don't play the same notes over and over, but you kind of feel like I do because even though there is a lot of motion, the bass line weaves in subtly with everything else.

What goes through your mind when you play such a line?

I think like a jazz player playing through changes. I try to understand the full chords Sam provides so I can come up with something interesting. I don't purposely avoid roots or 5ths. That's all I play on some songs, but I'm open to all possibilities. I look for opportunities to play passing notes—turnarounds are good.

You bounce between positions on the fingerboard quite a bit.

That comes from seven years of playing songs together. You learn ways to play the exact same thing in positions all over the neck. I can play all of our songs staying in the 1st position, but it gets boring night after night on tour. It's more interesting when I move around and maybe even play something different. Why not?

Your fingerstyle plucking technique appears quite traditional and disciplined.

I studied jazz and classical music on upright at Belhaven University, where they taught me, "Don't play the same string with the same finger twice consecutively—alternate." I use my index and middle fingers. Once you can alternate fast enough, you can play just as well as with a pick, which doesn't sound as warm.

Did you finish school?

No. We all dropped out of Belhaven together to do the band full-time after one of our best friends passed away. It was a make-or-break moment for us. We decided not to wait around to see if degrees would lead to jobs playing music. We made it happen. **BP**

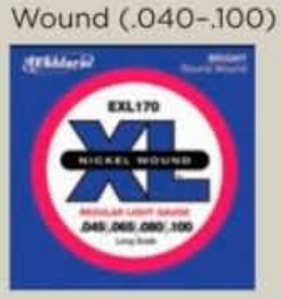
INFO

LISTEN

The Weeks, *Dear Bo Jackson* [Relativity, 2013]

EQUIP

Basses Fender American Vintage '62 Jazz Bass
Rig Ampeg SVT-450H, Eden D115XLT 1x15 cabinet
Strings D'Addario EXL170 Nickel Round Wound (.040–.100)



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Dwane is second from left.

MUMFORD & SONS

Ted Dwane

Babel On

BY BRIAN FOX

BELA FLECK LIBERATED THE BANJO FROM HILLBILLY stigma when he—with the assistance of a Wooten or two—proved its potential as an apparatus of art on par with anything played on the world's finest Strads and Steinways. When Mumford & Sons' banjo-bolstered *Babel* took top Album of the Year honors at this year's GRAMMY Awards, it removed all doubt that the instrument has seen its day of due deliverance. But banjo without bass is like biscuits without gravy. For his part, Ted Dwane lays it down thick on both upright and electric, serving up viscous licks with meaty tone and rhythmic kick.

Did you begin as an upright bass player?

I was a guitar player first, and then I got into electric bass. I studied that for a little while, and then started to teach myself upright. All the guys I was playing with in London wanted the upright, which was fine—I completely adore the instrument. Unless I'm carrying it around in the Underground, which no one appreciates.

What's an early lesson you learned on upright?

Don't use any of your arm strength to keep the bass in place—use your body for that.

Mumford & Sons is mostly drummer-less. How does that inform your style and tone?

With no drummer and a four-on-the-floor rhythmic feel, I need to fill out the low end while adding some percussive excitement. I really appreciate the uniqueness of the role. The music we play is like party music—there's a lot of foot stomping—and I like to lead the charge in that department. On songs like "Little Lion Man," there's a riff element to what I'm doing. But other time's it's about laying down quarter notes with the kick drum and giving it a lot of power.

What's your recipe for amplified upright tone?

I've developed a really percussive playing style. It's something I didn't really realize until we recorded *Sigh No More* [Island, 2009]. My tone was clack-y, which was a bit of a nightmare; it's not as nice into a microphone as it is in a live room. Early on, we started experimenting with things like mounting a P-style pickup to the fingerboard with gaffer tape. Now I have a Zadow magnetic humbucker that I blend with a David Gage Realist SoundClip. That way, I get a lot of low-end thump and fullness from the humbucker, and blend as much of the Realist as we can for that woody sound. The piezos supply the percussive side, and the magnetic pickup offers unlimited volume.

Without drums, I wouldn't imagine your stage volume being that high.

Well, there's a lot of reckless abandon. [*Laughs.*]

How does electric bass fit into the band?

I've been drawn more to electric as our writing has matured, because it feels as if that's what the songs are wanting. Also, you're anchored down when you're on the upright—it's nice to move around a bit.

As I started to do more electric playing and recording, I picked up a '78 Jazz Bass. It has a maple fingerboard, which I never imagined would be for me. I thought it would sound brittle, but it doesn't. You never know what you're going to like. That bass pretty much lives in Drop-D tuning [*DADG*]. That helps on songs like "Lover of the Light," which has a lot of chordal [double-stop] bass parts.

What's the band's approach to tracking in the studio?

We've done it a few different ways. We did about half of *Babel* together live, which was really fun. If we're not doing it that way, we'll generally map a click track to a live take and then build it up however it makes the most sense. **BP**

INFO

LISTEN

Mumford & Sons, *Babel* [Island, 2012]

EQUIP

Basses 1860s French-made upright (studio), Chinese-made upright with laminate back and sides and solid top, (live); 1978 Fender Jazz Bass, 2010 Fender 60th Anniversary Jazz Bass
Rig Zadow pickup system, David Gage Realist SoundClip, Gallien-Krueger 1001RB with 4x10 and 1x15 cabinets, Radial Firefly DI (for upright); Ampeg SVT-VR and 8x10 cabinet, Radial J48 DI (for electric), Shure SM57. "We don't mic the G-K rig. That's just to get the trousers flapping so it feels like I'm doing something!"
Strings Spirocore (upright) and unknown roundwounds

CONNECT

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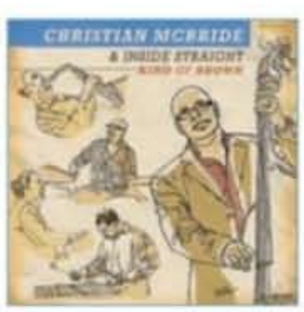
BP RECOMMENDS

ROBERT HURST
BOB: A PALINDROME [Bebob]

For his sixth CD, **Robert Hurst**, best-known for his work with Wynton and Branford Marsalis (including the *Tonight Show*), delivers a contender for contemporary jazz record of the year—made even more impressive given that the tracks were recorded in 2001, but not released, due to 9/11 and Hurst's rapid rise to first-call sideman status in jazz. Surrounded by Branford, Robert Glapser, Jeff "Tain" Watts, Marcus Belgrave, and Bennie Maupin, Hurst delves deep with his compositions, staying mostly on the Latin/Afro-jazz side rhythmically, while enhancing his probing melodies via the stark colors of his bowed upright, Maupin's bass clarinet, Belgrave's flugelhorn, and Glaspers' Fender Rhodes. The other key is the band's collective radar beneath the solos, enabling them to support, lead, dialogue, and take curves like a racecar (sorry, I couldn't resist getting those three palindromes in there!). The showpiece is Hurst's Ellington-esque, three-part "Middle Passage Suite," and the equally Duke-ish "Little Queen," but dig where the unit takes funk and group improv on "Jamming—a.k.a. Ichabad." —CHRIS JISI

THE STROKES
COMEDOWN MACHINE [RCA]

On an album that shifts between classic rock, funk, and Casio keyboard-inspired ballads, **Nikolai Fraiture** keeps the bass steady on the Strokes' latest efforts of New York retro-chic. While the band grasps at new genres, Fraiture gives what you'd expect from him, and that's a strong foundation and plenty of eighth-notes. —JON D'AURIA



CHRISTIAN MCBRIDE & INSIDE STRAIGHT
PEOPLE MUSIC [Mack Avenue]

Through his sax-and-vibes straightahead quintet, Inside Straight, **Christian McBride** has worked hard to draw in and connect with audiences not attuned to jazz—especially live, via his infectious personality, passion, and stage presence. On the group's sophomore effort, titled for its mantra, the concept continues, while the music remains pure post-bop. "Listen to Heroes Cry" boasts a memorable spiritual strain over modal medium swing; "Gang Gang," by vibist Warren Wolf Jr., interjects classical elements into its 12/8 bounce, *à la* the Modern Jazz Quartet; and McBride's Whitney Houston-dedicated "New Hope's Angel" is introspective while maintaining a funky pop backbeat. Throughout, Christian leads with strong support and engaging solos; he is, after all, on a mission. —CHRIS JISI

WAVVES
AFRAID OF HEIGHTS [Ghost Ramp]

On the California trio's fourth studio album, **Stephen Pope** enlists his "wall of noise" approach, as layers of bass fuzz and distortion drive Wavves' surf-meets-punk sound. Even with clean tone, his heavy-handed picking is prominent on songs like "Dog" and "Afraid of Heights." —JON D'AURIA

OS MUTANTES
FOOL METAL JACK [Krian Music Group]

If you know Brazilian psych-rock, then you know Os Mutantes. In 2006, ever-youthful frontman Sergio Dias restocked the group after a long-overdue reunion; *Fool Metal Jack* is their second studio outing since then (their first in English), and it packs a political punch. **Vinícius Junqueira** brings a raw-fingered but melodic touch to the bass on the bittersweet ballad "The Dream Is Gone"—a sensitive feel that he counteracts brilliantly on the extreme drop-tuned title track, which treads heavy and hard with lurid visions of war. —BILL MURPHY

BONOBO
THE NORTH BORDERS [Ninja Tune]

Bassist, DJ, and composer **Simon Green** (better known as Bonobo) reveals his newest batch of downtempo, trip-hop gems on an album that features a large palette of grooving synth bass. Green is known for recreating his material live with electric bass, so we can't wait to see his renderings of these songs. —JON D'AURIA

MICK HARVEY
FOUR (ACTS OF LOVE) [Mute]

After more than three decades as Nick Cave's wingman in the Bad Seeds, in 2009 Mick Harvey decided to break out on his own. He's no stranger to solo projects, but his current group—stripped down to a trio with double bassist **Rosie Westbrook** and guitarist/violinist J.P. Shilo—is best suited to his intimate, gut-wrenching songcraft. "Summertime in New York" surges with Westbrook's jazzy inflections, but the real killer here is "While There's Smoke (after)"—a hypnotic, one-and-a-half minute lope into the dark ambient apocalypse. —BILL MURPHY

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the wizard returns

geezer butler & black sabbath reconvene to conjure the magic once more

In the world of hard rock and metal bass, you'd be hard pressed to find a player who doesn't regard Geezer Butler as a giant of the genre. And while most of us are familiar with Geezer's deep, bluesy bends, his nimble fingerboard acrobatics, and his downright gargantuan tone, few are as familiar as Rob Blasko. Spending the last decade backing Ozzy Osbourne on his solo albums and tours, Blasko is a Sabbath scholar on another level. So when the opportunity arose for the two bass brothers to talk

by rob blasko

photo by neil zlozower / atlas icons

Iron men: Geezer Butler, Ozzy Osbourne, and Toni Iommi.

NEIL ZLOZOWER / ATLAS ICONS

shop, we jumped at the chance. Ahead of the release of 13, the first new album from Sabbath since 1995—and the first with Osbourne on vocals since 1978's Never Say Die!—Blasko and Butler met up to talk tone, technique, and tools of the trade.

How did it feel, after so many years, to work with Ozzy and Tony on new material?

I've been working with Tony since we did Heaven & Hell together, so we've been doing it since 2005. When the three of us got together, it was fantastic—it's like the magic was back. Everything fell into place. Nobody else sounds like us when we're together.

We did try in 2001 to do an album, and it just didn't work. Ozzy was doing his television show. We'd rented a house to to do the record, and we were all stuck in a house together, driving each other nuts. It just didn't feel right—it was too forced. This time, for some reason, we just knew it was going to work. It's sort of now or never, because we're not going to be around much longer! [*Laughs.*] The difference this time is that Tony had two or three albums worth of riffs. The three of us got together to listen to them, and we just knew that we had some good stuff to start working on. That made a lot of difference.

Did you go back to listen to the old records for inspiration?

We got together with [*13* producer] Rick Rubin at Kid Rock's house in Malibu. He had us listen to the first album, which none of us had listened to for about 30 years. When this process started we had [drummer] Bill Ward with us, so there were the four of us, listening to the first thing that we had done together. It was really weird! The four of

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us hadn't listened to it together since back when we recorded it in 1969. It was like listening to it for the first time. We realized it wasn't really heavy metal—it had a lot of blues to it. Each song was different from the other; there were a lot of different colors and flavors. Rick said that was the feel he wanted us to get on the new album, so that gave us the direction to go in.

What we learned from listening to that first record was how basic it was. On the first three albums, there were no keyboards or any of the experimental stuff we did later on. We wanted to capture that live feel again, and that's why Rick insisted we listen to our first album. He told us he didn't want a typical heavy metal album. So it was about re-learning the blues approach. And I think fans of the first three albums are going to like this one.

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You did that first record in just a matter of hours.

We did it in two days. We'd just come off playing a gig, and we happened to stop off at the studio on our way to do a residency in Switzerland. We played it like a live gig.

Rubin got the four of you in a room together to work on new music, which is something you hadn't done for years and years.

Yeah. Before this, Ozzy had a lot of distractions—he was doing his TV show and solo albums, as well. But this time, he was really into it. We all had suggestions for the music, and Ozzy and I collaborated on the lyrics together, like we used to in the old days.

Are your bass lines always inspired by a song's riff, or does it sometimes work the other way around?

Practically always, I'm following Tony's riffs, unless it's something that I've written, like "N.I.B" or "Behind the Wall of Sleep." On the new album—and about 95% of what we've done—the bass part is centered around Tony's riffs.

On the new album, there are two tracks that came together purely as jams in the studio, with one take. What we'd do is jam together for about an hour in the studio, before we'd record the song we were there to work on. This particular song [untitled as of press time], we were jamming and Rick said, "That is absolutely great—you've got to do that one!" We said, "What do you mean? It's just a jam." It was 18 minutes long, so Rick told us to pick out parts and make a seven-minute version of it. We did, but it just didn't sound right. We couldn't get that same feeling. So he edited his own version of it. Then Ozzy put vocal and harmonica on it, and we were like, "Yeah, that sounds really good." We didn't really even remember playing it! [*Laughs.*]

There's an acoustic track on the album called "Zeitgeist." For that, Tony was fiddling around with an acoustic that Taylor Guitars had just sent him, and Rick asked him, "What's that?" Tony was just trying the guitar out. Rick said, "Put bass on it, Geez." I didn't even know what he was playing! I was just watching the chords Tony was playing, making it up as we went along. And it worked.

How did Rick Rubin get involved?

For years, he's told us, "If there is ever another Black Sabbath album, I want to produce it." When we tried in 2001, we went to Rick with the songs we had written. But as we played them for him we realized it was a lot of crap. [*Laughs.*] He was up to working on it, but we knew it just wasn't up to standard.

This time, we were writing at Ozzy's studio. He'd come down, lie on the couch and listen and either

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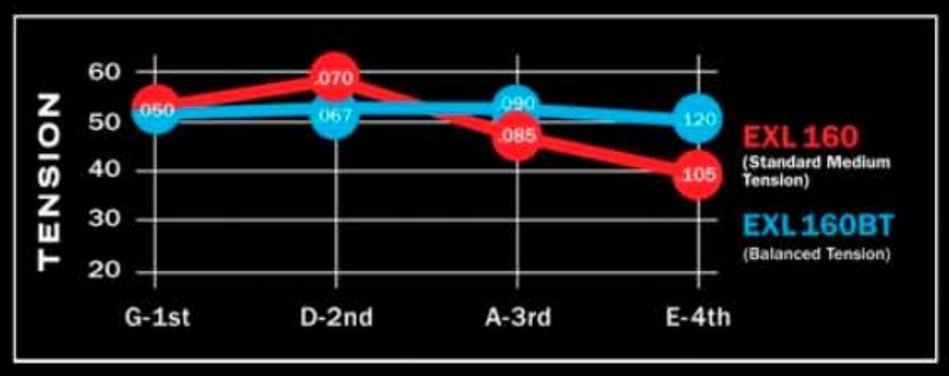

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go, "Yes" or "No." He'd leave after about ten minutes, and we'd have to figure out what was working and what wasn't. When we were tracking, we'd do a take, and he'd say, "Yeah, that was great. Do it again." So we'd do about four or five takes. Ozzy was starting to get pissed off, because Rick would say things like, "That was brilliant! Do it again."

Once we got a good take, he wouldn't even give us a chance to listen to it. He'd have us stay there and do the next song. We'd work from 1pm to 6pm, and no matter what we were doing at 6pm, we'd stop. We've never worked that way—we thought it was nuts! But he did a great job with Ozzy. That's where I really saw how good he is. He kept Ozzy in his register, reminding him that everything he did in the studio, he'd have to do on the stage. Ozzy had gotten used to singing beyond his range, which is why we couldn't do a lot of the later Sabbath stuff live.

Your performance at last year's Download Festival was pretty epic. How was it from your vantage point?

It was strange when we first went on, because we didn't expect so many people. I've played Download in the past, and usually there are around 60,000 people. But that day, it was 120,000. It took my breath away. It was overwhelming at first, but once we got into it, it was another gig.

How did you get your start as a player?

Originally I picked up rhythm guitar because I loved the Beatles—John Lennon in particular. I started off with a little acoustic guitar that my brother bought me. I eventually bought a Fender Telecaster, just to play along with Beatles tunes. Then John Mayall and Cream came on the scene. When I went to see Cream, Jack Bruce absolutely blew me away. I had never really paid much attention to bass before that. I knew that's what I wanted to do. I was in the Rare Breed with Ozzy at the time. Ozzy and I wanted to do music full time, but the other guys in the band didn't. So we left and got together with Tony and Bill. I still had my Fender Telecaster, but Tony said, "I don't want to play with a rhythm guitarist—you'll have to switch to bass. I had never played bass before, so I started really listening to what Jack Bruce was doing. I couldn't afford a bass, so I'd tune my Telecaster down. Eventually, I bought a Top Twenty bass and played it through a Selmer amplifier. I borrowed a friend's Höfner "Beatle" Bass on the way to one of our gigs, which was the first time I had ever played bass on stage.

As a guitarist, why didn't you play bass with a pick?

Because I saw Jack Bruce play with his fingers, and I said, *that*'s the way you play bass. After we got the first gigs out of the way, I swapped my Telecaster for my first Fender Precision Bass.

Ozzy says that when he saw *This Is Spinal Tap*, he

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thought it was a real documentary. He didn't get the humor in it, because it was so close to home. Are there any standout Spinal Tap-type moments from your time with Sabbath.

Oh, God. Too many to mention. One of our first American tours, we didn't know we had to have backstage passes and all that, so when we got to the gig, the security guy wouldn't let us in to our own gig. We had to get the police to escort us in.

How did you become one of Sabbath's primary lyricists, and where did the lyrical themes come from?

We knew when we started that if we wanted to get anywhere, we'd have to write our own material. I think the first song we wrote together was "Wicked World," and Ozzy came up with those lyrics. "Black Sabbath" was the second song. I was into the occult at the time. One night—I don't know if it was drugs or what—I woke up and saw this bloody shape at the

EDDIE MALLUK / ATLAS ICONS

bottom of the bed, staring at me. It totally freaked me out. I told Ozzy about it, and he used it for the lyrics. Then he just didn't want to write any more. Everybody else was singing about love, and we just didn't want to do that. With the heavy music, it just didn't feel right.

"The Wizard" was based on J.R.R. Tolkein's *The Lord of the Rings*, which was a big thing at the time, and I had just read it. "N.I.B." was about the devil falling in love.

Where does the band's name come from?

At the cinema I used to go to, a film called *Black Sabbath* came through. I was too young to get in to see it, but I loved the title.

On *Black Sabbath Vol. 4* [1972], you're pictured playing a Dan Armstrong plexiglass bass.

I only used the plexiglass bass because we were on tour in America, somewhere between Detroit and Toronto, someone had opened the case of my Fender bass and smashed it to pieces. You could see the hammer marks. It was a Sunday, and shops weren't open, so we got in touch with the promoter, who had a friend who ran a music shop. He opened it

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up for us, but it was mostly cheap stuff. The only reasonable bass they had was the Dan Armstrong. That's what I used on *Vol. 4*, which probably has the worst bass sound of any Sabbath record. On the next tour, that bass was stolen. That's when I started having custom Jaydee and John Birch basses.

At the 1974 California Jam festival, what is the white bass you played?

That was my first John Birch custom bass. After the Dan Armstrong bass was stolen, I got back to England and didn't know what kind of bass to play, so I just had one made. Throughout the rest of the '70s, I was using Birch and Jaydee basses. And by then we were tuning down as much as three semi-tones, so I needed to have custom instruments made. You couldn't tune other basses like that.

By that time I had a whole P.A. setup as a rig, with Crown power amps and what I think was an Alembic preamp. Standing in front of it, it wasn't that loud. But halfway out in the audience, it was deafening! We used to call those rigs Green Weenies, because they were green. The road crew hated me, because they were so heavy.

During *Technical Ecstasy* [1976] and *Never Say Die* [1978], you were known to play a Rickenbacker.

I actually only used the Rickenbacker on one show, and it was the one that was videotaped. It was the bass Glenn Hughes used in Deep Purple. I bought it just as a collector's piece. We got to that Hammersmith gig, and I had completely forgotten to bring my basses with me. The only one I had with me was the Rickenbacker. I'm not sure why I even had that with me.

In the *Heaven and Hell* era [1980–81], with Ronnie James Dio fronting Black Sabbath, you played B.C. Rich basses.

When we were writing for those records, I just wasn't happy with the bass sound I was getting. Somebody recommended B.C. Rich. I went down to the factory and met with [B.C. Rich founder] Bernie Rico. He made the basses for me himself. I really loved those basses—they had a great sound. It took me two weeks to get the studio bass sound for *Heaven and Hell*.

Your tone on *Born Again* [1983] is intense. What bass did you use for that?

I think I was using a Jaydee at that time. It was a neck-through bass, but it didn't have a truss rod. By the end of tracking that record, it looked like a banana!

What's your current setup?

Live, I'm using Harke Kilo amps with custom Hartke 4x12 and 2x15 cabinets—eight cabinets in all. In the studio I was using a combination of the Kilo, the studio's 1969 Ampeg SVT and an Eclair Engineering Evil Twin direct box. I played everything cranked all the way up. I actually ended up

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blowing out the SVT, so we used the Kilo through the Ampeg cabinet to get that really distorted sound.

What are your favorite tracks on the record?

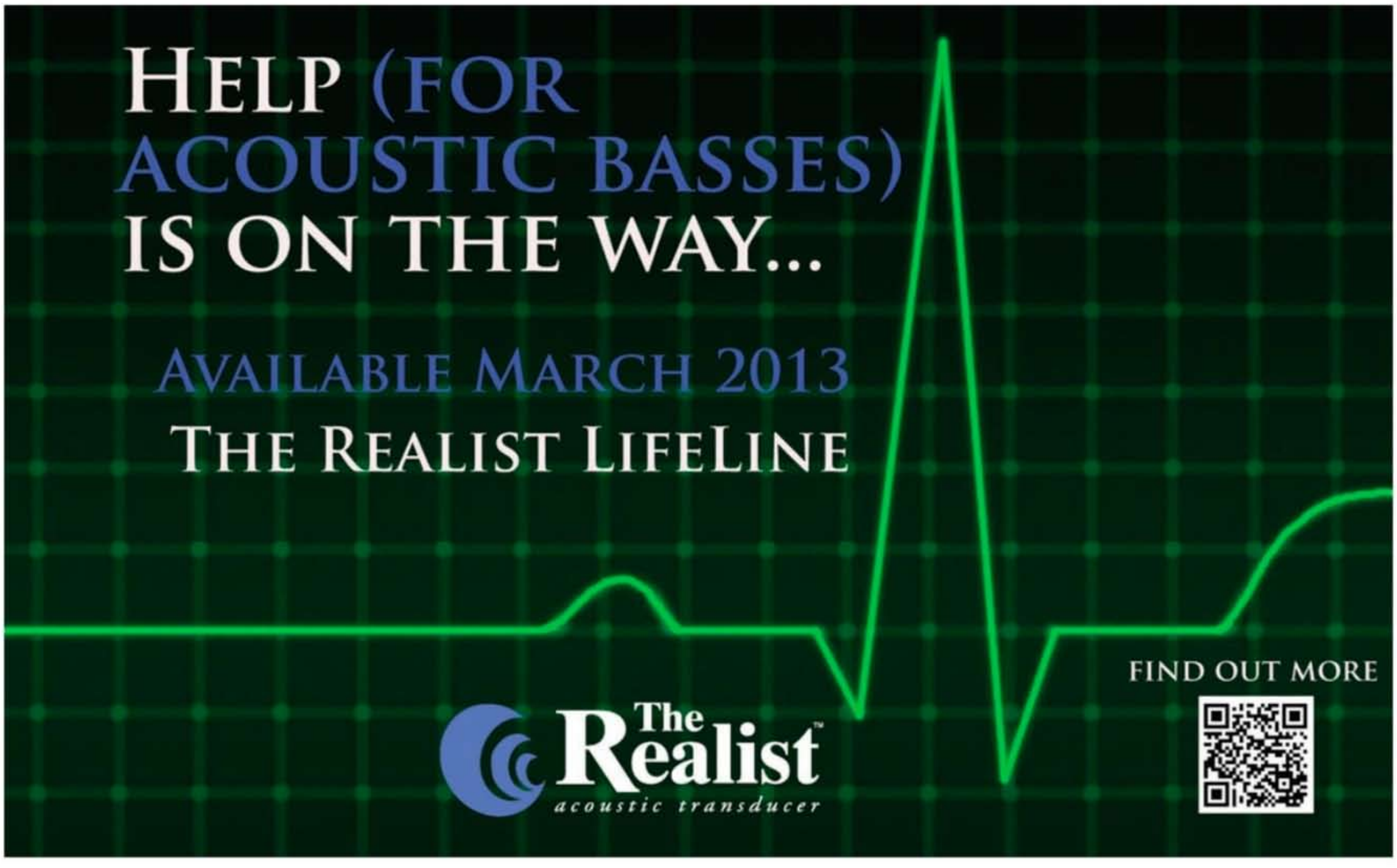
Now that I've heard them all back, "God Is Dead?," and the blues jam—because I can't even remember playing the bloody thing!

Fender, Dan Armstrong, Jaydee, Rickenbacker, B.C. Rich, Vigier, and now Lakland—what are you after in your bass choices?

I'm collecting—I collect guitars, as well. I'm after the perfect sound, and of course that's a never-ending search.

I've always loved the sound of my first Fender, so I'm always trying to find that sound. I have nine or ten pre-CBS Fender Basses. They're great at home or around the studio, but they won't stay in tune on the road—they're so temperamental. Plus, they're terrible when you tune down. I like how well-made the Laklands are. Aside from sound, a bass needs to be well made to stand up to touring. Consistency is a thing, as well.

Nowadays, your basses are tuned *CFB♭E♭*. What do you do for strings?



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DR Strings just made me a set of strings with a .115 low string. For a while, the thickest you could go would be .110, and then you'd jump all the way to a .120 for 5-string. These .115s are really good for *C* tuning.

You still use a wah when you play "N.I.B." What other effects have you played with?

On *Born Again*, I used a one-off Yamaha pedal board that had a bunch of different effects built into it. There are tons of bass effects on that album, but a lot of people think it's keyboards.

I used Tony's wah pedal on the first album, and I used a Tycobrahe wah pedal live. They went out of business, but there's a firm in Chicago that's making reproductions. Now, I've started using the Dunlop wah, and I really like it.

If you could change anything about what you've played or how you've sounded in Black Sabbath, would you?

Not so much what I've played, but I find the bass sound on *Vol. 4* to be terrible. That album was when we'd discovered cocaine. We also had a manager that ripped us off. He had taken all sorts of royalties and tour money, but he wanted to be a producer, as well. He didn't have a clue how to get good sounds. And he kept us so coked out of our brains that we didn't know any better.

Pulling some fan questions from social media, Ryan Beavers asks, "As Sabbath's main lyricist, is there any one song that holds special meaning for you?"

It's hard to say, but I know that Ozzy loves the lyrics for "Spiral Architect." He's always going on about how they're his favorite lyrics of all time. So I suppose it would be that.

Sean Pelletier asks, "How hard was it to be vegan on tour back in the day?"

Bloody very hard! It was literally a baked potato every day. That's what I lived on.

Joe Flores asks, "What was the first band you ever saw in concert?"

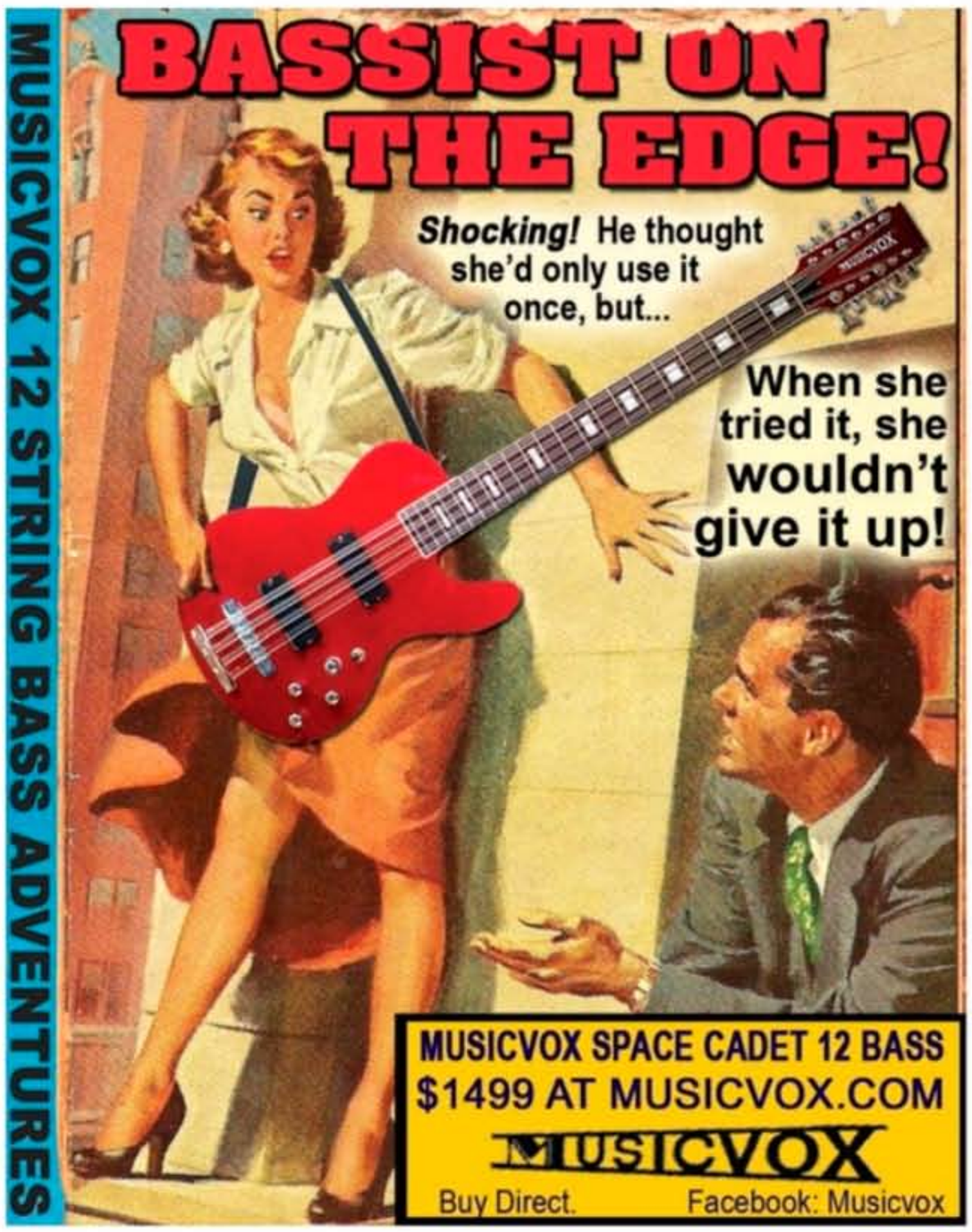
The Beatles, back in 1966 on their last tour. Problem is you couldn't hear a thing because all the girls were screaming through the whole bloody set.

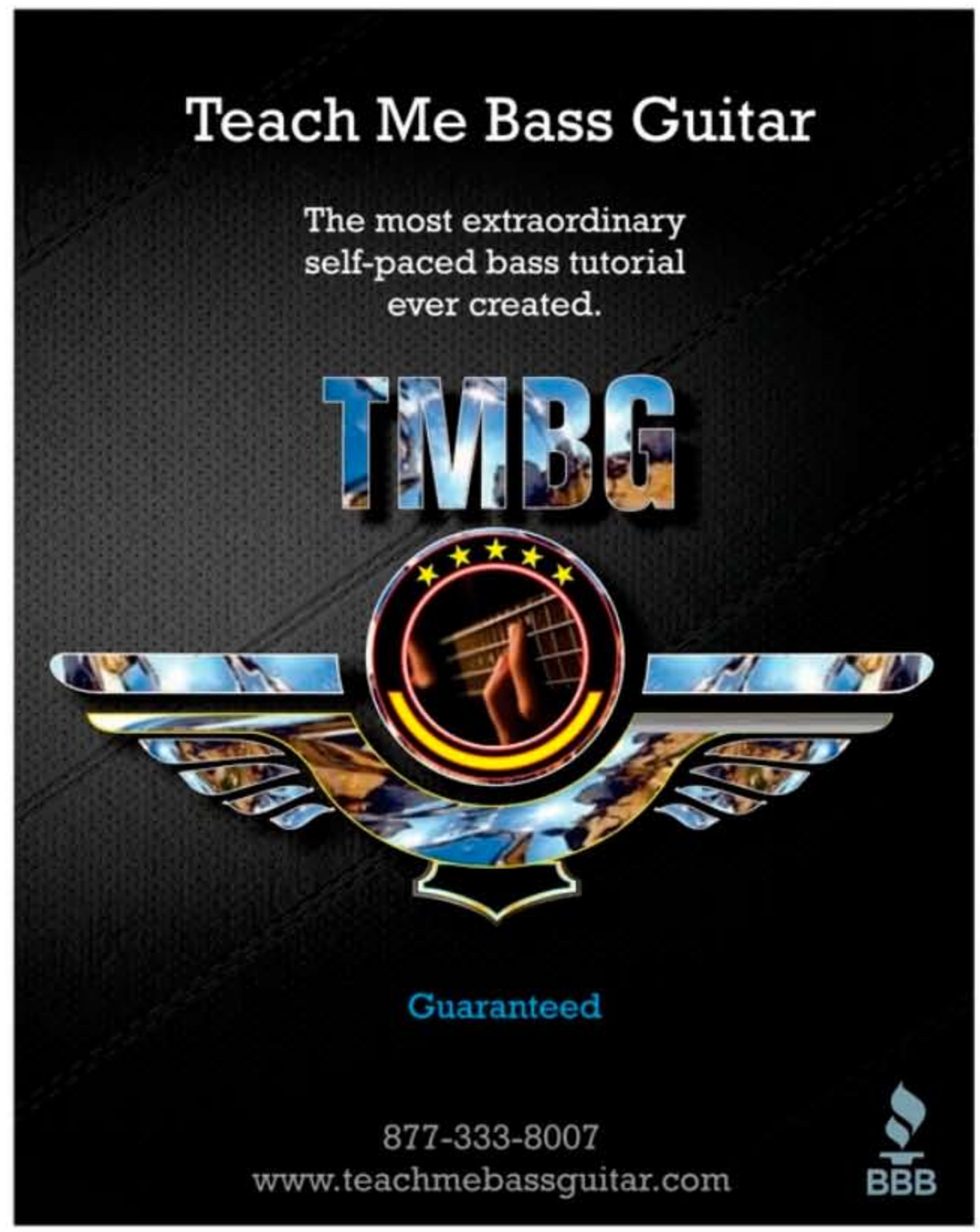
Ozzyrocks on Instagram asks, "With the music industry being what it is, do you think you'd have a chance of success in this day and age?

That's impossible to say. There are so many bands around now, and the competition is ridiculous. It's got to be so hard for a band to get known now.

Zachtheripper on Instagram asks, "What modern bands do you listen to?"

I don't really listen to a lot, since I've rediscovered soul music by bands like Sly & the Family Stone and Parliament/Funkadelic. The most recent heavy band that I like is Mastodon. I liked Black Mountain when they came out, but I haven't heard from them in years. And I like the Band of Skulls album. **BP**





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BEHIND BLUE EYES

KYLE EASTWOOD BRINGS HIS UNIQUE PERSPECTIVE TO THE VIEW FROM HERE

THERE'S MUCH TO READ INTO THE TITLE OF KYLE Eastwood's latest CD, *The View From Here*. The 45-year-old bassist/composer has certainly had a unique career, gaining cult status as much for being the son of film icon Clint Eastwood as for the six sturdy solo CDs he has released since 1998. That's just fine with Eastwood, a friendly but taciturn sort who has never sought fame or a high profile, and lets his music do the talking. Reflected in the disc's 11 tracks is Eastwood's lifelong liaison with jazz and cinema (he has composed or contributed to the scores of five of his father's films), and his longtime European home base. From ballad to burner, his quintet's two-horn front line evokes stark imagery contrasted by the world music colors splashed about by his savvy rhythm section. On the bottom, Eastwood moves deftly from electric to upright, as the music dictates, thoughtful in support, expressive in solos, and, like his bandmates, always yearning to explore.

Born on May 19, 1968 in Los Angeles, and raised in Carmel-by-the-Sea, California, Kyle Eastwood had his initial encounter with bass and music when his dad taught him a boogie-woogie bass line on piano, leading to formal lessons and then to guitar (for a role in his father's film *Honkytonk Man*). He didn't return to bass until high school, when his friends needed a bass player. Purchasing a Japanese P-Bass copy, he dug into the grooves of Motown, Memphis/Stax, James Brown, Led Zeppelin, and reggae. Soon after, his deep love of jazz—bornw from regular trips to the nearby Monterey Jazz Festival as a child—resulted in him taking on upright bass, as well. Lessons with Ray Brown and Bunny Brunel solidified his musicianship, and although he entered USC to study film, his passion for music won out. He left school, formed his own jazz band in L.A., and eventually moved to New York City, as he began his solo path.

JEAN BABTISTE MILLOT

Your new CD has a noticeable rhythmic focus and seems to be more of a collaborative effort.

The rhythmic aspect wasn't conscious, but it's probably the result of my listening to a lot of North and West African music of late, as well as having traveled to South Africa to research music for [the film] *Invictus*. I wrote "Une Nuit Au Senegal" after immersing myself in Senegalese music, and "Sirocco" is built on a hand-drum loop inspired by listening to Middle Eastern and Asian hand drummers. The title track started as a rhythmic idea; I envisioned it as a Wayne Shorter type of tune, with a busy bass line and groove contrasted by a simple, long-tone melody in the horns.

The CD *is* more collaborative. I came up with sketches and ideas for the songs, and then I got together with my pianist, Andrew McCormack, and we fleshed them out further. Then we brought them to rehearsals and soundchecks where the horn players added some parts and melodies to help us finish them up. I've been fortunate to have a great London-based band for six or seven years now, and I write with them in mind. The entire CD was recorded live, except for us editing out one chorus of a song because it was too long.

For your last three solo records, you seem to have dialed in on a signature sound, featuring a two-horn lineup.

Yes, it's what I've been working on and developing the past six years. I've always loved the two-horn sound, from Miles Davis' bands in the '50s and early '60s, and Art Blakey & the Jazz Messengers. I like the challenge of writing for two horns; you can imply and cover quite a bit of harmony and get some interesting sounds if you pick the right two notes. As much as I enjoy records that are bass-tastic, featuring the instrument in all kinds of technical ways, for me it has always been important to have a good balance of composition and improvisation

BY CHRIS JISI

YANN CHARLES

JEAN BABTISTE MILLOT

that features all of the instruments in the band.

There's a cinematic quality to your writing, as well. "The Promise" needs a great movie behind it!

Yeah, I thought that, too [*laughs*]. Again, it's not a conscious choice, but from studying and being around a lot of great film music, and writing for film, it seeps in there naturally. Writing a score can be a bit more restrictive because you're composing for what's onscreen, and there are edits you have to make that are not natural musically, but we've adapted some of my film pieces in the band. Andrew and I wrote "The Promise" on piano and bass at my apartment, and it had more of a Spanish, Paco de Lucia flavor, but it took a different direction when we added the full band.

What's your composing process?

Generally I write at the piano, trying to come up with a chord progression, or a melodic or rhythmic motif. I wrote "Song for M.E.," which is for my mother, Maggie, on electric bass utilizing open strings; then we finished it as a band. I like the collaboration aspect because it gets you outside of

your box. It's inspiring to bring an idea to someone and see how they interpret it and take it somewhere that's not exactly where you were thinking of going. It's a more deliberate version of what happens onstage, when you're supporting and dialoguing with the soloist.

How do you come up with bass parts and decide whether to play electric or acoustic bass on a song?

Typically, I have a chord progression and I cycle it and see what develops when I play along. Other parts are more composed, with Andrew doubling the bass line with his left hand on piano. As for choosing which instrument, I can usually hear either one working on most tunes, and I often try both; I could have played "From Rio to Havana" on upright. I kind of let the song and the groove decide. If it swings, I

INFO

LISTEN

Kyle Eastwood, *The View From Here* [Jazz Village, 2013], *Songs From the Chateau* [Mack Avenue, 2011], *Metropolitain* [Rendezvous, 2009]; *Invictus* (Original Motion Picture Soundtrack) [Milan, 2009]; *Gran Torino* (Original Theme Song From the Motion Picture) [New Line, 2007]; *Letters From Iwo Jima* (Music from the Motion Picture) [Milan, 2007]; *Paris Blue* [Rendezvous, 2005]

EQUIP

Electric basses "I play fretted and fretless 5-strings that are custom protoypes designed by Bunny Brunel; they were built by Roger Geffen over 20 years ago for a series Gibson was going to produce, that didn't happen. I have two, and Bunny has a couple. They're active, with Bartolini P/J pickups; I've gotten so used to them, and I haven't found anything I like better."
Strings La Bella M42B Hard Rockin' Steels, .040–.128
Upright basses Czech-Ease travel bass with Gage Realist pickup system, French-style bow, and La Bella Steel Core strings; 70-year-old Pöllmann (¾-size)
Rig Phil Jones Suitcase Combo and 4B extension cabinet
Effects DigiTech BP-200 Bass Multi-Effects Processor (for reverb and EQ)
Recording ***The View From Here*** Bass guitars direct through a tube D.I. and a miked Phil Jones Suitcase Combo; Czech-Ease direct via the Realist and live via two mics (by the bridge and by the *f*-hole on the *G*-string side)

CONNECT

Watch Kyle play "Hot Box" with Manu Katché, "Rio to Havana" at Abbey Roads Studios, and "Big Noise From Winnetka." **bassplayer.com/july2013**

KYLE EASTWOOD'S WORLDVIEW

KYLE EASTWOOD APPROACHES HIS bass lines, support lines behind soloists, and his solos with a composer's sensibility, making melody and subtle harmonic and rhythmic variation ever-present, welcome ingredients. Examples 1a and 1b are taken from Kyle's budding bass guitar anthem "Hot Box," from his 2009 CD, *Metropolitain*. He remembers, "[Drummer] Martyn Kaine and I were jamming in his London studio, thinking about the Headhunters and the Meters. I came up with a line that ended up being the bass part and the melody." **Example 1a** shows the A section line (complete with a Paul Jackson-esque hammer in bar 2). For the B section, shown in **Ex. 1b**, Kyle varies the line slightly to fit the harmony, and later drops down an octave and stretches a bit behind a keyboard solo over the same chord change. He advises, "The line perpetually feels like it wants to get faster, so you actually need to sit back a bit."

Example 2 shows the two-bar main upright bass line of "The Way Home," from *The View From Here*. Says Kyle, "We cycled the groove and I came up with this ostinato. It has that tricky little pause at the end of the first measure, which makes the downbeat of bar 2 feel a bit awkward because so many of the other notes are pushed. Keep repeating the phrase until it feels settled."

Examples 3a and 3b are from "Une Nuit Au Sénégal," on *The View From Here*. To open the track and at two later points, Kyle plays a four-bar double-stop figure on his 5-string, as shown in **Ex. 3a**. **Example 3b** contains the main bass line, doubled by pianist Andrew McCormack, as it's heard in the solo sections. For both, Kyle notes, "The key with West African grooves like this is that the space between the notes is very exacting, and has to be in just the right place for the feel to work; the rests are as important as the notes. Listen to West African musicians play 12/8 feels, and try to breathe like that here."

EX. 1A

Bright funk ♩ = 118 C7

H PO

EX. 1B

Bright funk ♩ = 118 E♭7

EX. 2

Bright African feel ♩ = 200 Am9(♭13)

EX. 3A

Bright West African feel ♩ = 140 B♭

EX. 3B

Bright West African feel ♩ = 140 B♭7 4x G7 4x

tend toward the upright, and if it's in the R&B realm I'll think electric—but I also love playing funk on upright, as I did on "Route de la Buissonne."

Do you favor electric or acoustic bass, and what have you brought to each instrument from the other?

Having split my time on both over the past six years or so, I love them equally; I like having the different colors to apply. Although I started on electric, there was a point in my early jazz bands in L.A. and when I lived in New York, when I was playing upright 95% of the time; now it's 50/50. Much of the transference for me has been bringing electric bass concepts to the upright, like playing 16th-note-based funk lines with a sharper attack and short note duration. Conversely, working to get a sound out of my hands for upright has affected my tone and touch on the electric. In a broader sense, it's all about the function of the instrument—playing with the drummer and making the groove happen, first and foremost.

Who are the important influences for you on upright and electric bass, and who are some of your current favorites?

On electric it was James Jamerson, Duck Dunn, Chuck Rainey, Paul Jackson, John Paul Jones; then of course, Jaco, Stanley Clarke on both instruments, my teacher, Bunny Brunel, Anthony Jackson, Jimmy Johnson. For the upright, obviously Ray Brown, whom I studied with, Ron Carter, Paul Chambers, Israel Crosby, Oscar Pettiford, Mingus, Scott LaFaro, Dave Holland—I used to transcribe their lines. More recently, I've been into Avashai Cohen—I like his playing and writing—and Esperanza Spalding and Marcus Miller.

How would you describe your dad's musical influence on you?

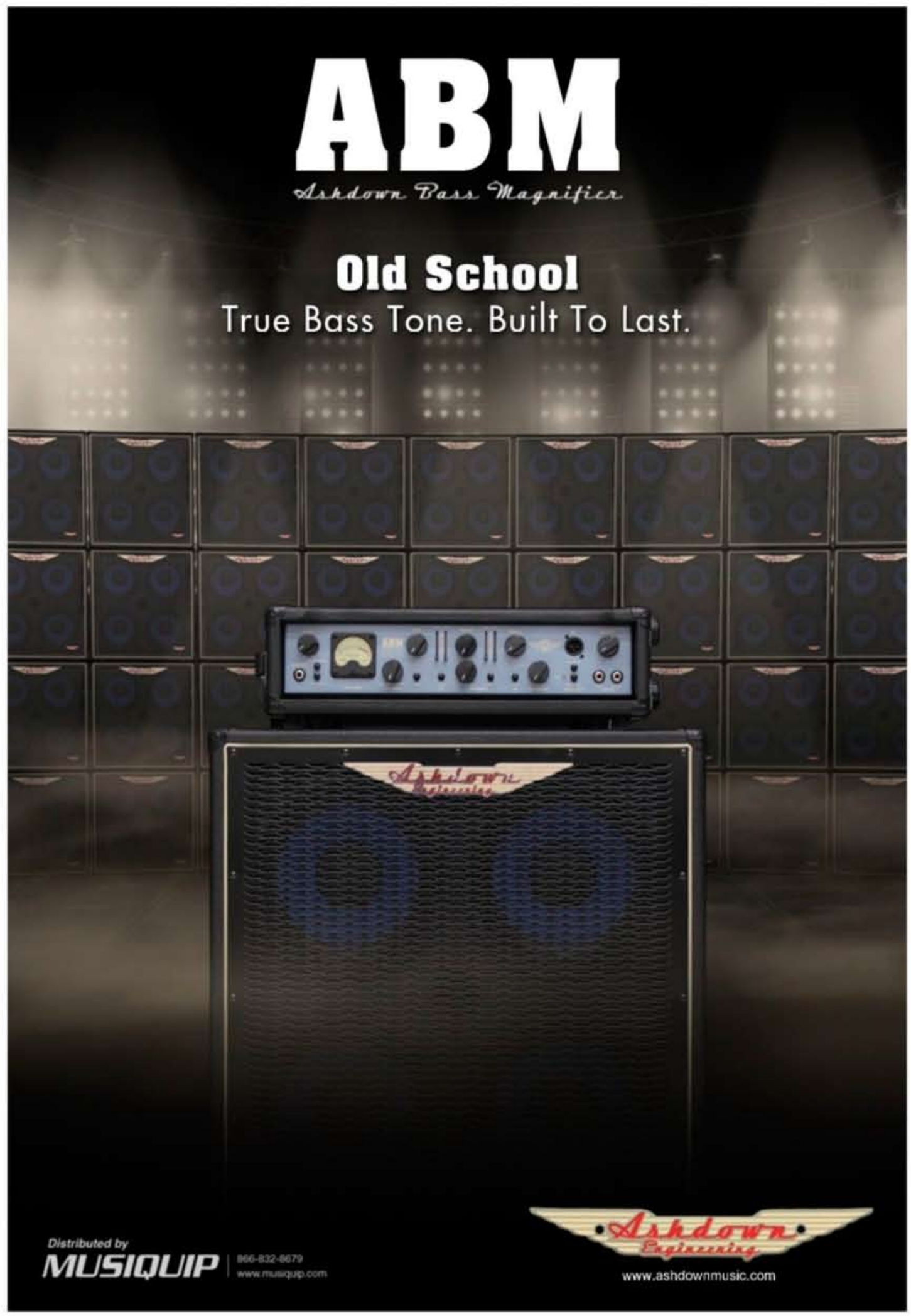
He, along with my mom, brought music into my life and gave me my love of music, from the piano we had in the house and the classic jazz and blues records he would play, to bringing me to the Monterey Jazz Festival, where I got to see and meet so many jazz greats. I can remember watching the Count Basie Big Band from backstage, near the drummer, and being drawn to the rhythm section. Throughout my development, my dad has always been encouraging and supportive of my music career, and he comes to see the band if we're in the same city. Our schedules haven't matched up of late, but he's due to start another film project later this year and eventually we'll work on the music for it.

You've been living in Paris for a while.

It's an amazing city and there are a lot of great opportunities to play at festivals and clubs throughout Europe. The rail travel is very together, so you don't have to deal with airports all the time. And the audiences are more open to different kinds of music, especially jazz, which they love. As a result, top musicians from all over the world come to live in Europe, which is a great learning opportunity for me.

What's ahead for you?

The rest of this year is pretty much devoted to promoting and supporting my CD, finishing my U.S. dates, and then touring Europe and Japan. Going forward, I hope to keep doing what I do—writing and releasing music, growing as a bassist and a composer, and making a living as a musician. For me, it's the greatest job in the world. **BP**



SOUNDROOM

Roundup

Micro Combo Amps

BY BRIAN FOX

GIVEN THE UBIQUITY OF GALAXIES, ANDROIDS, IPHONES, AND YOU-NAME-IT, IT'S EASY TO FORGET that just 10 or 12 years ago, the tools needed to execute the basic commands of a smartphone could easily gobble the surface area of your average credenza. In that same time span, the increased production of ultra-light Class D amplifiers and neodymium drivers has eased the burden of the weekend warrior's dreaded schlep in a most welcome way. While future neodymium availability—due to the demand of that rare earth element as a component of said smartphones—remains to be seen, we're hopefully optimisitic that in another decade, we'll be reviewing pint-sized SVTs and 360s the size of soda cans. (A boy can dream. . . .) Until then, we've rounded up a bevy of itty-bitty brutes for consideration. The increase in headroom, efficiency, and features in small combos has rendered the term "practice amp" all but moot; in the right setting and with the right support, a few of these shrimps could even hold their own on a proper gig. Dig.

ACOUSTIC B15

Astute BP Readers (as if there's any other kind!) will recall from our May cover story on the Acoustic 360 that after relative dormancy through the '80s and '90s, Acoustic is back in a big way. While the 360 is built by Acoustic USA, Acoustic Amplification's more widely available line of combos, heads, and cabs—including the Acoustic B200 MKII we reviewed in December '12—is available through Guitar Center.

The 15-watt, 1x10 Acoustic B15 has a certain sonic similarity to its B200 big brother; both have a barky assertiveness that would speak well in a number of settings. While it was possible to get bogged down in the B200's deep EQ capabilities—six bands of boost/cut and a notch filter made it a little hard to find a "flat" setting—not so with the more straightforward B15. The three bands of boost/cut are well voiced for dialing in your desired sound, and the SHAPE notch filter button carves a mid-scoop that's especially hip when used with the B15's onboard overdrive, which stays on just this side of useful, staying clear of the fuzzy territory that can suck the life out of a bass.

Bottom Line At 15 watts, the Acoustic B15 isn't the loudest of the micro combos gathered here. But its ease of use and auxiliary capabilities (⅛" jacks for AUX inputs and headphones) make it a worthy contender in this increasingly competitive playing field.

	ACOUSTIC B15	AMPEG BA-110	IBANEZ PROMETHEAN P3110	MARKBASS MICROMARK	ORANGE CRUSH 25BX	ROLAND MICRO CUBE BASS RX	WARWICK BC20
STREET	$110	$180	$350	$480	$180	$280	$150
CONFIGURATION	1x10	1x10	1x10 with dome tweeter	1x6	1x8	4x4	1x8 with tweeter
POWER RATING	15 watts	35 watts	300 watts	50 watts	25 watts	5 watts	20 watts
CONTROLS	VOLUME, OVERDRIVE, OVERDRIVE LEVEL, SHAPE, LOW, MID, HIGH	VOLUME, TREBLE, MID, BASS, CD VOLUME	GAIN, HIGH, MID, LOW, PHAT, MASTER, LIMITER	VOLUME, VARIABLE PRE-SHAPE FILTER	VOLUME, HIGH, MID, LOW, GAIN	GAIN, VOLUME, BASS, MIDDLE, TREBLE, EFX (CHORUS/FLANGER/ T-WAH), DELAY/ REVERB, RHYTHM GUIDE (PATTERN AND VOLUME), AMP MODE	BASS, MIDDLE, TREBLE, VOLUME
AUX IN	⅛" stereo	RCA	⅛" stereo	⅛" stereo	⅛" stereo	⅛" stereo, ¼" mono, ¼" footswitch	⅛" stereo
AUX OUT	⅛" headphone	¼" line out, ¼" headphone	⅛" headphone, XLR line out with -20dB pad and ground/lift, ¼" external speaker	⅛" headphone, XLR line out with ground/lift, ¼" external speaker	¼" headphone, ¼" line out	¼" headphone	⅛" headphone
WEIGHT	22.6 lbs	32.6 lbs	21 lbs	11 lbs	19.2 lbs	14.2 lbs	21.9 lbs
DIMENSIONS	13.8" x 18.1" x 10.4"	16.3" x 16.3" x 12"	17.7" x 14.4" x 21.7"	8.9" x 8.9" x 8.6"	12.4" x 13.5" x 9"	11.6" x 11.7" x 8.2"	13" x 16" x 15"
OTHER	N/A	-15dB ¼" input, ¼" effects send/ return	N/A	Speaker mute switch	N/A	Optional battery-powered operation, onboard tuner and compressor	N/A
MADE IN	China	China	China	Italy	China	China	China
CONTACT	acousticamplifi-cation.com	ampeg.com	ibanez.com	markbass.it	orangeamps.com	rolandus.com	warwick.de

AMPEG BA-110

Though the brand was built around such iconic tube amps as the B-15 and the SVT, Ampeg has long had skin in the game of solid-state combos for those on a budget. Weighing in at 32 pounds, the BA-110 is the heaviest of the combos gathered here. But when it comes to booty and bite, a bit of girth can be a good thing. Though there is nothing quite like the throb of a heavily burdened SVT, at least a hint of that midrange grunt is present in this diminutive descendent. (Maybe next time around, we'll daisy chain eight of these combos and stack it against our resident SVT. Yes, we're that twisted!)

For aux connectivity, Ampeg opted for RCA ins and ¼" headphone outs. Though I'm personally partial to ⅛" jacks for both, it's a choice that will no doubt appeal to many. The decision to have two instrument inputs—one with a 15dB pad—is most welcome. Plugging an especially hot (though passive) bass into the 0dB jack clipped the preamp when I cranked my bass, so the option of a -15dB input jack saved the day. Even in the "quiet" jack, it's clear that the BA-110 is a brawler. An XLR DI would seal the deal, but I could certainly imagine a low-volume gig where the BA-110 could hold its own. The combo sounded killer when I was playing it, but it spit out a nasty *pop* when turned on and off, whether an instrument was plugged in or not. The amp had me in the zone when I was playing, so I was a litte bummed it would harsh my mellow on either side if that.

Bottom Line Despite its size, the BA-110 earns its place in the lofty Ampeg lineage. The pronounced *pop* when you turn the unit on and off is a bummer, but ultimately it's what happens between those to moments that matters more.

IBANEZ PROMETHEAN 3110

Rated at 300 watts and weighing a mere 21 pounds, the Ibanez Promethean is one of the most attractive options for players looking for a flyweight combo that can hold its own on a gig. Bolstered by the combo's headroom, the Ibanez' booty was among the biggest of the bunch, and additional features ranging from onboard XLR DI and ¼" extension speaker jacks to a switchable dome tweeter put the Promethean in a class all its own. A kickstand at the base of the combo allows you to tilt the combo back for better monitoring at close range. Those looking to put the Promethean through it paces in the bedroom will appreciate the Promethean's ⅛" headphone jack, which automatically mutes the combo's single 10" speaker, and it's ⅛" AUX IN for CD/MP3 player playback.

It's easy to get carried away with the Promethean; it's a whole lotta amp, and though the single 10" speaker can certainly hold its own, it's possible to push it too hard. Fortunately, the Promethean boasts an LED clip indicator light and a switchable onboard limiter. Set flat, the Ibanez is mostly transparent; three bands of EQ offer a wide range of sounds, and the bass-and-treble-boosting PHAT control makes dialing up a deep and delicious slapstyle tone super easy.

Bottom Line Like its Greek Titan namesake, the Ibanez Promethean 3110 seeks to harness the most advanced technology of its day and make it available for us mere mortals. In terms of power, portability, and features, the Promethean delivers. For its design, features, and sound, the Promethean 3110 earns a BASS PLAYER Editor Award.

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MARKBASS MICROMARK

With its Little Mark heads and New York series cabinets, Markbass has long lead the charge for the subway set—those wanting a proper rig portable enough to schlep on a bus, in a cab, or on any other form of public transportation. The 11-pound, 50-watt, 1x6 Micromark takes that trip to a terminus just this side of absurd. With just two knobs—VOLUME and Markbass' trademark VPF (Variable Pre-shape Filter) control—the Micromark is a vision of simplicity. The combo's 50 watts might not move enough air to cover the average club gig, but paired with an acoustic bass guitar or upright bass, the Micromark could be an acoustic bassist's best friend. Other features on the Micromark include ⅛" AUX in and PHONES out jacks, a balanced XLR DI out, and an on/off switch for the combo's single 6" speaker.

Like its bigger Markbass brethren, the Micromark has a lot of heart. The single VPF tone control is simple and effective, acting essentially like a midrange boost/cut; at low settings, the Micromark has a deeper, darker character, whereas cranking the VPF bumps midrange for a more aggressive bark.

Bottom Line With a street price of $480, the 11-pound Micromark has a price tag in inverse proportion to its size and footprint. But especially in semi-acoustic settings, the Micromark earns its keep. Did we mention it weighs 11 pounds?

ORANGE CRUSH 25BX

Orange amps have long been the go-to for guitarists seeking the signature tone—and eponymous hue—so beloved in the stoner/doom/metal set. But with rock bass gods like Geddy Lee and Glenn Hughes adding Orange to their backlines, the company is winning kudos from the bass community, as well. Orange's flagship AD200B KM 3 head is a 200-watt, all-tube affair, but its smaller sibling, the Crush 25BX, is touted as the brand's perfect practice amp.

Like its fellow Oranges, the Crush 25BX has a character all its own—rather than the midrange-forward Ampeg-like grunt or the clean-and-clear transparency of a Gallien-Krueger, Oranges evoke a guitar-like presence that's a little light in the low end, but righteous in its own right. Cranking the GAIN on the Crush 25BX didn't yeild the harsh clipping of an overdriven solid-state preamp, but rather doled out a tone with a deliciously tube-like, throb-y latency. ⅛" AUX and ¼" headphone jacks add to make the Crush 25BX a perfectly appointed practice amp. Low end can be had by boosting the LOW control, but the fun of this combo is copping aggressive, Lemmy-like tones without inflicting the attendant hearing loss.

Bottom Line The Orange Crush 25BX may lack the juice of its larger, louder counterparts, but it's a fun way to get that heavy *clang* in a lightweight, practice-friendly package.

ROLAND MICRO CUBE BASS RX

Roland's Micro Cube Bass RX is a jack-of-all-trades—a 5-watt, battery-operable, 4x4 combo with built-it amp models, effects, tuner, and drum machine, it's hard to know where to start in assessing this multi-faceted practice tool. Plugging in, step one is to select an amp model; the RX has eight to choose from, each based at least loosely on iconic amps such as the Ampeg B-15, the Acoustic 360, and the Fender Bassman. Between its models and effects (octave, chorus, flanger, delay, reverb, and compression), it's a little tricky finding a zeroed-out "flat" setting on the amp. But this combo is less about transparent precision than it is about having fun, whether it's in the privacy of your bedroom or the open air of a public space (permits not included).

The Roland's RHYTHM GUIDE is essentially a drum machine with 10 different patterns and tap-tempo programmability. On their own, the drum tracks sound a little anemic, but playing along with them reveals the Cube's profound potential as a groove-improving practice pal, especially when it comes to clave-based bass lines. Similarly, the amp's onboard effects aren't as deep and nuanced as the stompboxes Roland/Boss is famous for. But for the busker bassist looking to take a few grooves (and loops?) to the street, the fact that all these features lived in a one, small, battery-powered box is truly remarkable.

Bottom Line The battery-operable Roland Micro Cube Bass RX is a bass busker's best friend, and its RHYTHM GUIDE drum machine is a powerful practice tool for those seeking groove improvement.

WARWICK BC20

The 1x15, 150-watt Warwick BC150 received high marks (and an Editors Award) when we reviewed it in the December '12 issue, so we had high expectations for its 1x8, 20-watt baby bro. While we found a few things puzzling about the larger BC150—the control array, the power-switch placement—there was no head scratching when it came to the BC20, which was dead-simple and elegant. Certainly, the BC20 can't move quite as much air as its 1x15 counterpart, but due in part to its ported cabinet construction, the BC20's single 8" speaker pumped out a serious amount of low end. The speaker's HF horn complement lent high-end clarity, with little of the hiss that so often plagues horns. The BC20 features ⅛" jacks for AUX in and headphone out.

Bottom Line The BC20 may be the smallest and lightest of Warwick's BC series of combos, but it retains much of the line's depth and clarity. **BP**

Kay Vintage Reissue
Jazz Special Electric Bass Guitar

BY E.E. BRADMAN

NOT EVERY NEW ARRIVAL FLICKS OUR "WOAH," "WAIT," "wow," and "what?" switches all at once, but this Kay Jazz Special Bass reissue—with its strong combination of kitchy looks, classy construction, and classic tone—is guaranteed to inspire a wide range of reactions. From the huge "K" headstock chevron and pencil-thin neck to its shapely body, beautiful binding, and "luncheonette counter" pickguard, this double-cutaway Kay announces its affiliation with bygone times. The good news is that it comes by its old-school looks honestly.

A PIECE OF HISTORY

The Kay Musical Instrument Company made amplifiers and a wide variety of stringed instruments from the 1930s to the 1960s, but among bass players, the company is best known for its uprights. Kay was also an early purveyor of electric basses, however: The K-162 "Electronic" Pro Bass, unveiled in 1952, was the very first production hollowbody bass; its association with Howlin' Wolf bassist Andrew "Blueblood" McMahon led to its being nicknamed the "Howlin' Wolf bass."

Five years later, the company introduced the apparently higher-quality gold "K" series, which included the K5970 Jazz Special Bass and its distinctive, oversized headstock. The entire line was discontinued in 1962, but the Jazz Special Bass has enjoyed a couple brushes with fame: In the summer of '63, Surfaris bassist Pat Connolly used one to lay down the bass line for "Wipe Out," while Paul McCartney played

one in the video for "Ebony and Ivory" in 1982.

When Kay decided to reissue the Pro Bass and the Jazz Special Bass a few years ago, they brought in Fritz Brothers honcho Roger Fritz, a luthier and bass player who has made instruments for luminaries like Darryl Jones, Randy Jackson, and George Harrison. Fritz, a fan, had already built high-end Kay copies for his customers, so his affection for the look and the sounds of yesteryear were a perfect match for this instrument.

OLD-TIME ROCK & ROLL

The Jazz Special Bass may get some of its sophisticated vibe from its archtop-like body, but at 2½ inches thick, the Kay is slimmer than many archtops and yet too thick to fit in a solidbody gig bag. (Fortunately, it comes with a gorgeous hardshell case.) It's cool that the body, comprised of a parabolic arched maple back, maple sides, and 3-ply curly maple top, doesn't weigh much, but I couldn't help but notice just a wee bit of neck dive.

Once I actually put my hands on the neck, however, I was too busy being surprised by its thinness to notice anything else. The 1½" nut just about matches my '62 Jazz Bass, but the combination of the slim neck profile, the light-gauge strings, and jumbo frets threw me for a loop. When I tried to put standard-gauge strings on the Kay, the nut rebelled; likewise, though I dug the stud-mounted rosewood bridge with adjustment thumbwheels and the cool chrome trapeze tailpiece, I decided not to force thicker-gauge strings into the tailpiece.

Once I got over the thin strings, I enjoyed how easy it was to get around the neck. I got the best tone (and the best string tension) when my right hand was directly over the single-coil "blade" pickup. Even when unplugged, the Kay's articulate thump inspired melodic walking lines and reggae ostinatos, and the pickup ably amplified the instrument's natural tone. Something about this bass inspired me to stay below the 9th fret and solely on the *E*, *A*, and *D* strings. The Jazz Special Bass's sonic signature is warm and focused, especially with the tone closed, and I can imagine that standard-gauge strings could bring out even more of the instrument's best qualities.

The proof of the pudding was at a recording session where my job was to groove over '50s-type "ice cream" changes and an updated, tambourine-enhanced Motown backbeat. It was the sort of track that artists like Outkast and Janelle Monae have taken straight to the bank, and the Kay—quirky but minimal, fun but muscular, business and pleasure all at once—was just what the doctor ordered. Like the simpler times that inspired it, the Kay Jazz Special Bass's tone had plenty of character and was yet refreshingly uncomplicated. In other words, it was right on time. **BP**

SPECIFICATIONS

KAY VINTAGE REISSUE

JAZZ SPECIAL ELECTRIC BASS GUITAR
Street $900
Pros Warm, thumpy tone; fun to play.
Cons Use of standard-gauge strings requires slight modification.
Bottom Line The Kay Jazz Special Bass reissue is a blast from the past that's lightweight, eye-catching, and built for roots music.

Contact kayvintagereissue.com

SPECS

Construction Set neck
Body Maple
Neck Maple
Fingerboard Rosewood
Fingerboard radius 12"
Bridge Rosewood
Tailpiece Chrome
Width at nut 1.5"
Scale length 31"
Pickup Thin Twin blade
Tuning keys Wilkinson extra light
Weight 8 lbs
Finish High-gloss polyester protective polymer, in black or blonde ($100)
Made in China

TECHBENCH

Leo Quan Badass II

Gotoh Stamdard

Hipshot A Style

Babicz FCH4

MOD SQUAD

Bridge Building

BY ED FRIEDLAND

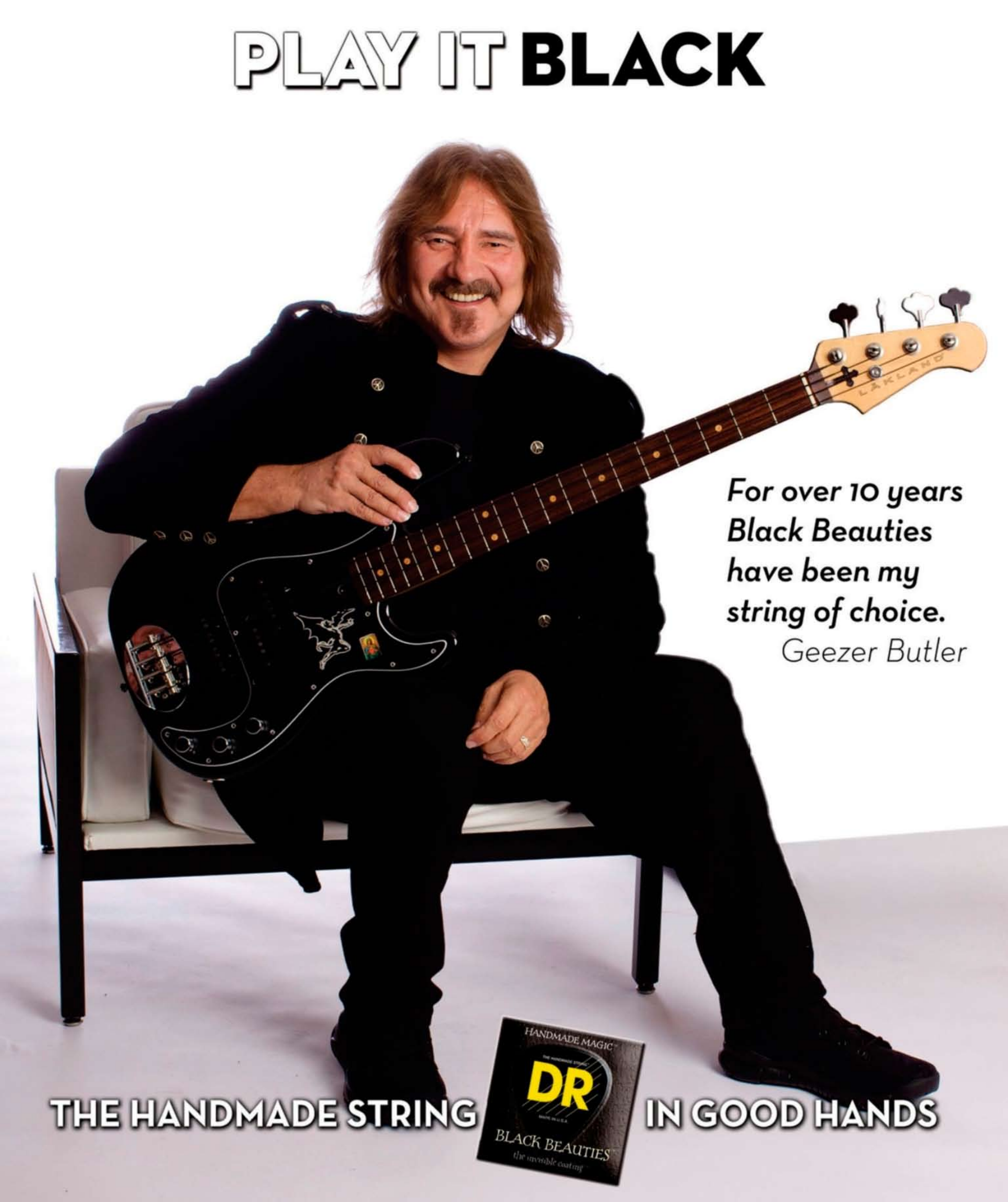
AS I BEGIN THIS SERIES OF ARTICLES ON BASS modifications, let me first publicly apologize to the victims of my obsessive quest for tone—P-Basses routed for J pickups, the Stingray I thought would sound great with a P pickup in neck position, the Jazz Bass I thought would improve with molten lead poured into holes cut beneath the bridge ... Over the years, thousands of dollars were spent, and thousands more have been lost by desecrating what would now be vintage instruments. Forgive me, Leo.

My purpose here is not to give you step-by-step instructions on how to mod your bass, but to discuss different types of "refinements" that can be done, weigh their various merits, illuminate any potential issues that might crop up, and give you some perspective before you spend $700 replacing parts on a cheapo bass with the false hope of one day recouping your investment.

An effective modification can boost the performance of your bass to a new level, but there is always the chance it won't. Consider this: An instrument is a combination of elements that work together, so there is no guarantee that a new ingredient will interact the way you expect. For example, my alder/maple Mike Lull MV5 is an outstanding instrument in every way, and its round, vintage vibe works great for much of what I do. But with a Jazz Bass 5-string, I also want the option to get a hi-fi, Marcus Miller-type slap tone as well, and I wasn't getting it. The Lull has the same wood combination as my treasured '74 Fender Jazz, a bass that defines the exact sound I want, but one difference (of many) is the bridge. The MV5 came with a lightweight aluminum Hipshot A-style bridge, while my '74 Jazz had the ubiquitous Leo Quan Badass II. The Quan's high-density zinc-alloy construction and sturdy engineering gave that bass more sustain, attack, and clarity compared to the lightweight basic Fender bridge.

With this in mind, I swapped out the MV5's aluminum bridge for the heavier brass version of the Hipshot A model, expecting similar results—but what happened next shocked me. The bass did not magically transform into a Marcus-machine; instead, the clarity and trueness of my once-amazing *B* string

PLAY IT BLACK



For over 10 years Black Beauties have been my string of choice.
Geezer Butler

THE HANDMADE STRING IN GOOD HANDS

became an overtone-choked mess that resembled a steel drum being played through a flanger. That mod lasted all of five minutes—and as soon as I replaced the original bridge, the bass returned to its former self.

What happened? Any number of factors could have contributed to the mismatch. The MV5's resonant body is chambered for lower weight, and perhaps the heavier bridge created a bottleneck for the string vibration. That's one theory. Ultimately, though, it brought back a lesson I've been taught many times but have yet to learn: Great luthiers spend years perfecting their instruments; they build them their way for a reason. The heavier bridge would likely produce great results on another bass—possibly even even one built the same way—but there are no guarantees. The most important thing is that I did not alter the instrument permanently.

Swapping out your bridge is a fairly common mod, and in most cases you can do it yourself without any alteration to the bass. Check to make sure the bridge's anchor screws line up with existing holes. For example, stock Fender 4-string bridges attach with five screws spaced .690" apart, and there are several direct replacements that require no drilling, like the Badass II, Babicz FCH 4, Gotoh Standard, and Hipshot FM1. In some cases, you may be able to find a bridge that has a screw-hole pattern that will hide the original holes and/or be hidden by the original bridge if you choose to put it back.

While most 4-string basses conform to the Fender-standard.750" string spacing, if you play a 5 or 6, there are many possibilities. String spacing is measured from the center of one string to the next, and while some manufacturers still use inches for measurements, it is common to see these specs described in millimeters. For example, Fender's .750" is roughly 19mm spacing, and many 5-string basses use this spacing at the bridge (Lakland comes to mind), while others use 18mm (Lull, Ken Smith, et al). MusicMan 5's clock in at 17.5mm, but I've seen spacing as narrow as 14mm on other basses. Make sure a replacement bridge has the same string spacing as the original, or you may experience issues downstring at the pickups, fingerboard, or nut. Check to see if you need a bridge that allows stringing through the body or not; many new bridges are convertible, meaning they allow for top-load or through-body stringing. Some companies (like Hipshot) offer the same model of bridge in different materials, such as aluminum or brass—but as my experience shows, ultimately it comes down to how a bridge reacts on your bass. One more thing to notice is the height of the bridge's base plate. The wrong height could prevent you from dialing in the proper action on some instruments (particularly basses with set-neck or neck-through construction).

Modding can be fun or torture, expensive or cheap, successful or a bust, and yet we throw ourselves into it every time with the hope that our bass will magically develop a new characteristic we desire. Hey, sometimes it works! And regarding my quest for the Marcus slap tone out of my Lull? As of this writing, I think I have it dialed in. We'll talk about that next time. Until then, have fun, but don't cut up your old Fenders! **BP**

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Lakland Artist
Geezer Butler of BLACK SABBATH

PHOTO BY SANDRINE LEE

Geezer Tours with Lakland

Rock & Roll Hall of Fame artist Geezer Butler knows exactly what he likes in a bass guitar. He's even designed several of his own throughout his career with Black Sabbath, Geezer Butler Band, G/Z/R and Heaven & Hell; searching for the right feel, playability, aesthetics and of course, tone.

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WOODSHED

JAZZ CONCEPTS

The Groove Factory, Part Two

It's Easy When You Know How!

BY JOHN GOLDSBY

WHEN I WORKED WITH TENOR SAXOPHONIST BILLY MITCHELL many years ago, he'd often reply to compliments about his swinging rhythmic style by saying, "It's easy when you know how!" With a wink and a sly smile, Billy confirmed a straight truth about music: Playing a great groove is not about playing *all* of the notes, it's *how* one plays the *best* notes. Easy, right?

Playing groovy bass lines should be easy. Descriptive phrases like "grooving hard," "swinging hard," "slammin'," or "heavy groove" belie the fact that playing rhythmically compelling bass lines demands the technical command of simple, yet subtle articulations. Last time, I gave you some easy scale exercises to improve your groove and rhythmic pocket by using quarter-notes and eighth-notes. This month, let's dig deeper into the relationship between notes and rests, and how to combine long notes and short notes. You can play all of these exercises with either straight eighth-notes or swing eighth-notes (i.e., with a triplet feeling).

Example 1 shows a *C* major scale with a *tenuto* marking over each note (the line under or over each note indicates that it should be played for its full value without cutting off the note early). Remember to connect each note to the beginning of the next note so that there is almost no gap, even when you change strings or shift positions. Your ability to groove depends on this simple technique. You play the bass—don't let the bass play you!

Last month, we practiced quarter-note lines with an anticipated eighth-note on the "and" of beat *four*. **Example 2** uses eighth-note lines, also with an anticipated eighth-note on the "and" of *four*. Make sure that after you play the "and" of beat *four*, you come in squarely on the "and" of beat *one* in the next measure. The key here is to feel the downbeat in every bar, even though you are not actively playing it. You should feel the downbeat in time, even though you are only sustaining a note.

Example 3 uses *staccato* notes (the dot under or over the note indicates that it should be played short and detached). Stay in time when playing staccato notes—there might be a tendency to rush, since there is more space between each note. There are two ways to play staccato notes: (1) Shorten the note by lifting your left-hand finger off the string and muting the note immediately after it sounds; or (2) shorten the note by muting the note with your right-hand index or middle finger. Make sure the lengths of the staccato notes are uniform. And watch out for the trap: The "and" of *one* in the last bar might take you by surprise. Stay in time!

How short is short? The "and" of beat *four* in Ex. 3 could be played very short, but then there is possibly an uncomfortably long silence before the "and" of beat *one* in the following measures. **Example 4** shows the same exercise with a *tenuto* marking over the "and" of *four*. Experiment with Examples 3 and 4 to hear how you can control the rhythmic feeling simply by changing the staccato or tenuto articulation on the "and" of *four*. **Example 5** holds the "and" of *four* over into the downbeat of the following measure.

Examples 3, 4, and 5 demonstrate how you can influence your groove by changing just one small articulation. The downbeats (in every measure except the first) have a different

INFO

JOHN GOLDSBY

Visit John on the web at **johngoldsby.com** for sound samples, videos, and answers to all of your bass-related questions.

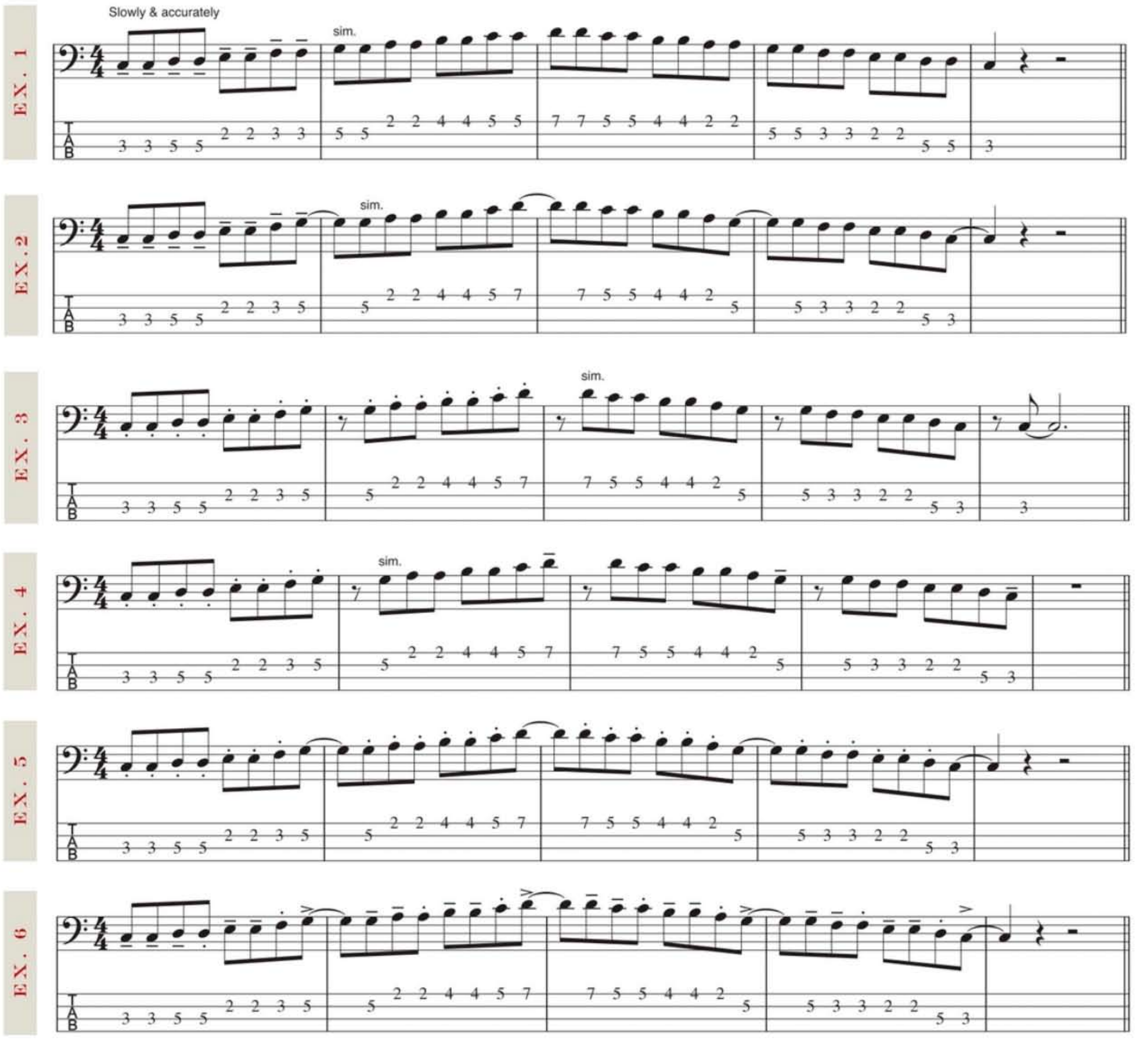
CONNECT

- Check out Eddie Jones (bass) and Sonny Payne (drums) driving the Count Basie Orchestra with Billy Mitchell (tenor sax), proving that "it's easy when you know how!" Note how Eddie Jones lays into the "and" of *four* at 4:33.
- Tenuto, marcato, snap pizzicato, Bartók pizzicato? You probably play all of these articulations; now learn what the musicals symbols mean.
- Hutch Hutchinson: Groove Gatherer. Hutch demonstrates his mastery of tenuto and staccato articulations in these transcriptions of his work with Bonnie Raitt. **bassplayer.com/july2013**

feeling, depending on how you articulate the "and" of *four*. **Example 6** mixes short notes and long notes, and has an accent on the "and" of beat *four* in every bar. The accent (>) marking indicates that the note should be played slightly stronger than the others. This will help fill the downbeat in the following measures. Make sure that you articulate all of the tenuto and staccato notes. You create your groove by using consistent phrasing, but also by your ability to mix articulations like short, long, and accented notes. When you master the fundamental techniques of rhythmic articulation, your bass lines and solos will sound easy, natural, and groovy.

Trumpeter Nicholas Payton has written about the groove conundrum in his blog: "Swing is elusive. The harder you try to swing, the less you swing." Or as pianist Hal Galper described the goal of effortlessness, "Playing music is supposed to be easy! Most of us think it's supposed to be hard to play, but truthfully, you can't play music well if it's hard to do. If you can't do it easily, you can't have fun and project that feeling of fun to your bandmates and listeners." [*IAJE Journal* interview with Hal Galper, 1990].

Next month, we'll look at mixed articulations using eighth- and 16th-note rhythms. Until then, keep your mind open and your fingers grooving. It's easy—when you know how! **BP**



BLUES YOU CAN USE

Chris Dreja: Big Bird

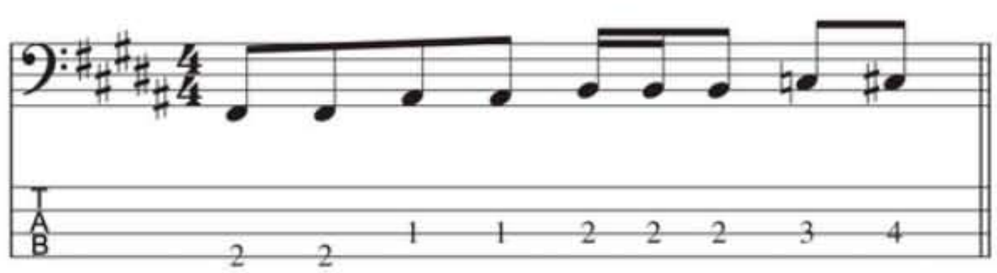
BY ED FRIEDLAND

LET'S TAKE ANOTHER TRIP TO THE U.K. AND CHECK INTO some more great British blues lines. Between 1963 and 1968, the Yardbirds were significant in their role as incubator for nascent rock & roll guitar gods Eric Clapton, Jeff Beck, and Jimmy Page, as well as their successes in early psychedelic pop. But the group had firm roots in the American blues and R&B that fueled the British Invasion, as evidenced by stellar tracks like "I'm a Man," "Highway 69," and "Got to Hurry." When founding member Paul Samwell-Smith left the group in 1966, the bass gig went to the session-weary Jimmy Page. It quickly became obvious Page's talents were better utilized on guitar, and this spurred longtime rhythm guitarist Chris Dreja's shift to bass—birthing the mind-blowing yet short-lived (and barely recorded) front line of Page and Beck. While rock history holds many tales of guitarists being "demoted" to bass for the good of the cause, in hindsight, this one seems justifiable.

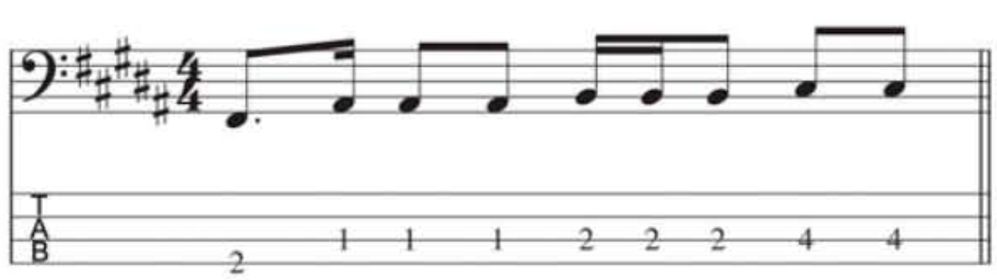
Coming from the rhythm slot, Dreja may have been better suited to playing bass than a lead player, but in this month's example, you'll see he was not completely immune from "GPBS" (guitarist playing bass syndrome). The track in question is "Smile on Me," a two-toned blues raver that alternates between a Latin-influenced take on Howlin' Wolf's "Killing Floor" riff (see **Ex. 1**), to a stomping Chicago-style shuffle. Dreja adds a little space on the downbeat, skipping into beat *two* with a 16th-note pickup, and "Anglicizes" the line a bit by shunning the flatted 5th, as shown in **Ex. 2**. When the groove turns shuffle for the second time, Dreja starts out with a classic two-bar pattern with a chromatic walk-up from the 3rd to the 5th, similar to **Ex. 3**. He walks back down the scale from the 5th, and ends on a *G*♯ (scale degree 2), which unfortunately, provides a weak resolution to the root of the IV chord. Switching to a textbook triad-based pattern, he lays into some fat quarter-notes in bar 5, and establishes the eighth-note triplet on beat *four* as a recurring theme. The return to the I chord sees the bass switch yet again to the ubiquitous 1–5–♭7–8 box pattern, but going back to the triad when the V and IV chords arrive. In bar 11, Dreja rips into a steady triplet lick that proves to be quite a test at 140 BPM. It certainly builds the energy behind Page's frantic hullabaloo, and sets the stage for a whole lotta triplets in the second chorus (**Ex. 4**).

Dreja recorded this track on the legendary "Yardbird Rivoli," the band-owned Epiphone analog to the Gibson EB2. The Rivoli was quite a staple on the British scene, falling into the hands of Chas Chandler (the Animals), the Who's John Entwistle, Scott Walker (Walker Brothers), Karl Green (Herman's Hermits) among others. The instrument's massive Sidewinder pickup (a.k.a. "mudbucker") produces a lumbering woomph, but played with a pick

EX. 1



EX. 2



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ED FRIEDLAND

Ed "The Bass Whisperer" Friedland plays, writes, and teaches out of his bass base in Austin, Texas. **edfriedland.com**

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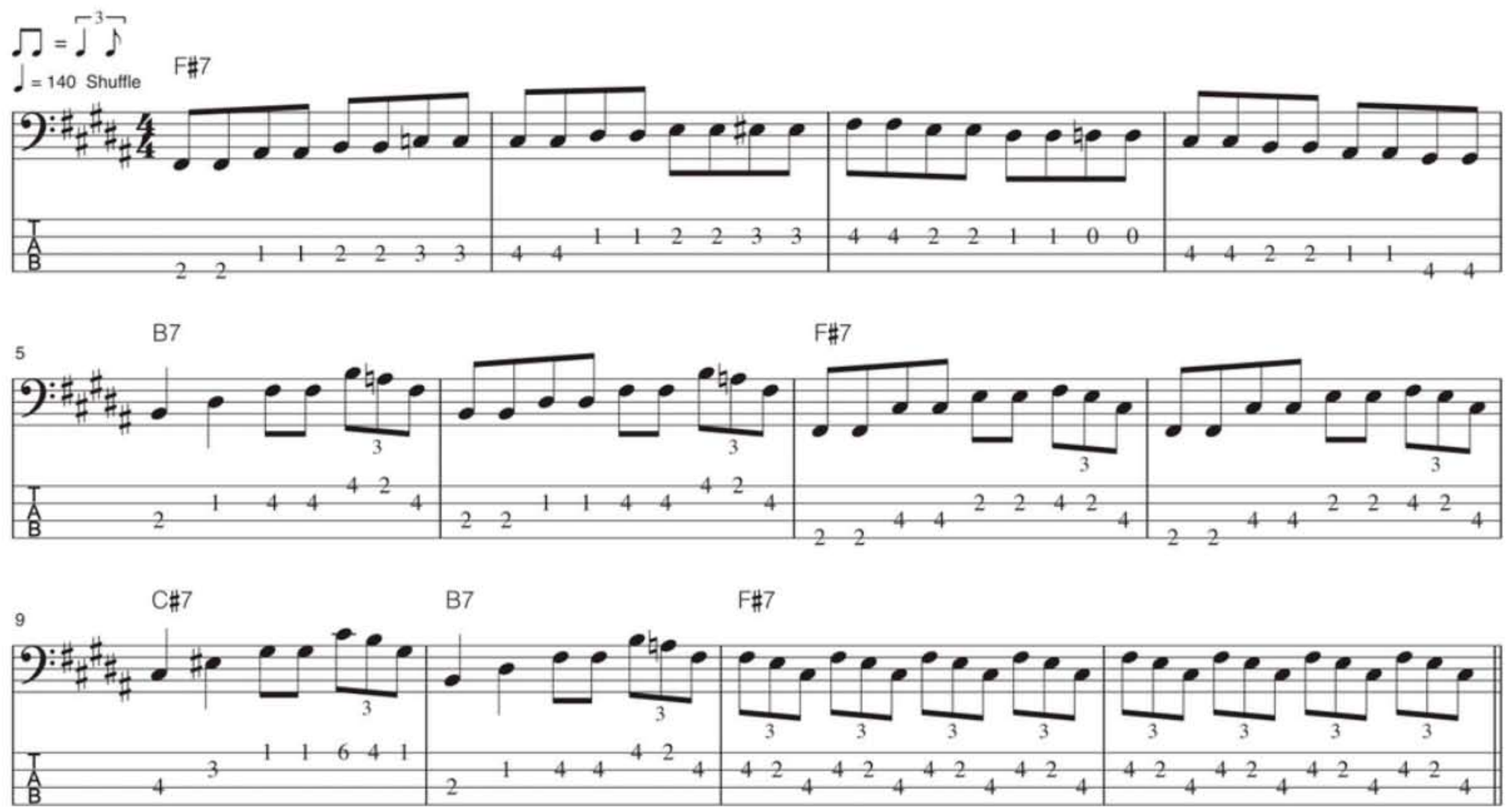
(as many sufferers of GPBS will do), it has a rounded articulation that permits active lines like this one to poke through the mix. Dreja really pumps the groove throughout the performance, which at times gets a bit raw. Perhaps it was the times—London in 1967 was a spiraling vortex of rock and pop energy, and Jack Bruce had already broken the mold of stodgy, sequestered bass parts. While not as well known as his Cream-fed countryman, Chris Dreja played bass with some of the world's greatest guitar slingers, in one of the most influential bands of the 20th century. **BP**

EX. 3



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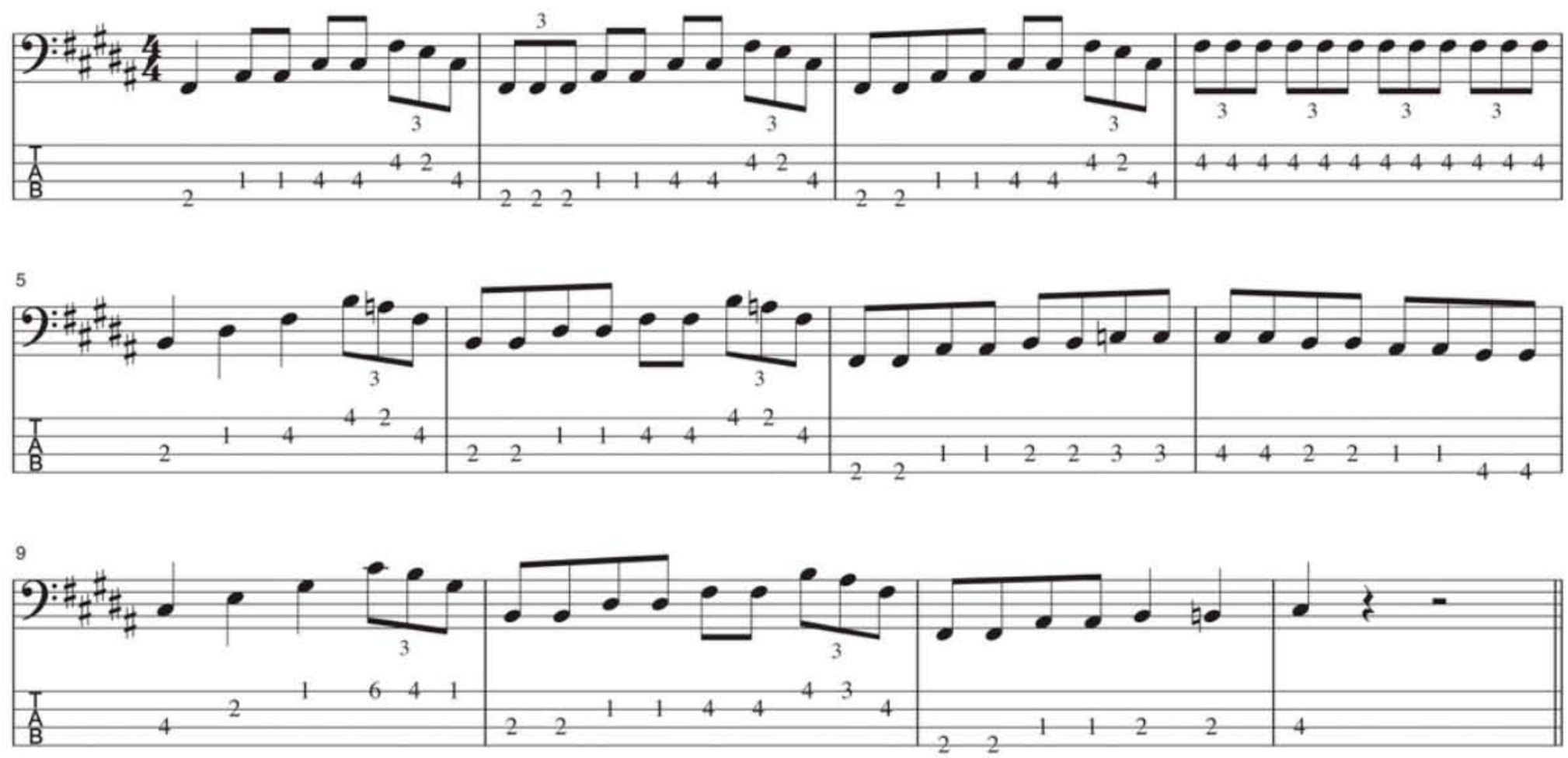

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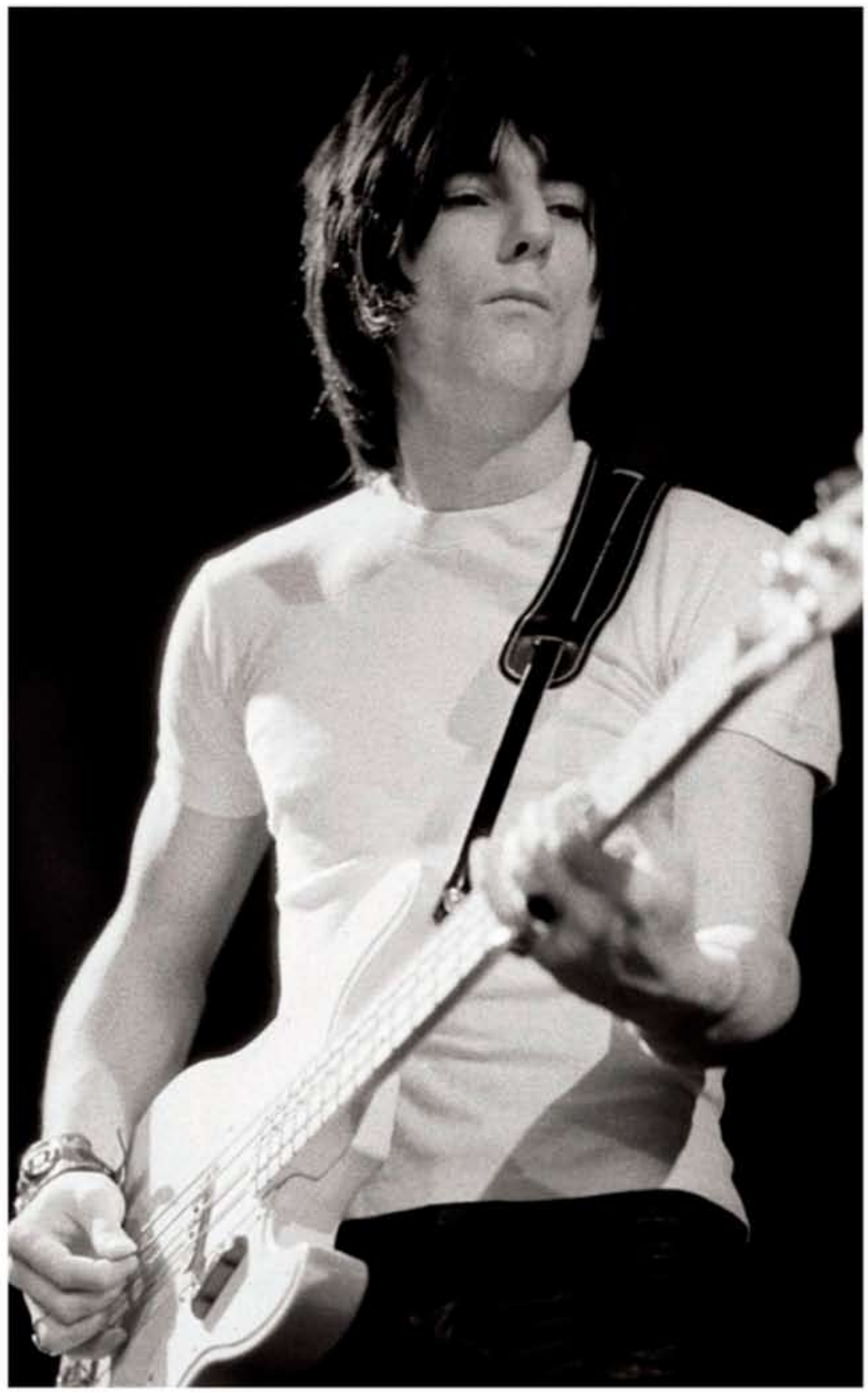


"Let Me Love You" By Jeff Beck

Ron Wood's Complete Bass Line

BY ED FRIEDLAND | PHOTOGRAPH BY BARON WOLMAN / ATLAS ICONS

IN 1968, JEFF BECK RELEASED *TRUTH*, A PUMPED-UP blues-rock album featuring Rod Stewart's grainy vocals, Mickey Waller on drums, and a recently "demoted" Ron Wood on bass. Originally the band's second guitarist, Wood took over the bass duties when original member Dave Ambrose missed a rehearsal. As it turned out, Wood actually preferred letting Beck take the spotlight on guitar, and for two albums (the band put out *Beck-Ola* the following year), he laid the foundation for the future of hard-rock bass playing. In addition to a '68 Fender Telecaster Bass, Wood played a Fender Jazz Bass he "obtained" from a music store near their rehearsal studio. In a 1975 interview, Wood told *Guitar Player*, "I had no money ... I couldn't pay for it, so I borrowed it and never took it back. About five years later I paid for it, after they tracked me down." Running it through a Marshall 100-watt stack and playing roundwound strings with a pick, Wood's J- and T-Bass had snarl and a throaty presence that could be the DNA for the coveted "Geddy growl."

As a guitarist coming to the bass, Wood brought his melodic voice to the instrument (exemplified by his later work on Rod Stewart's "Maggie May"), plus a rhythmic ferocity that came from well-groomed pick chops. His dynamic approach to the rhythm section shaped the performances of many classic tracks, but there is an undeniable amount of slop involved, as well (also exemplified on "Maggie May"). In today's perfection-obsessed recording industry, there would have

INFO

LISTEN

Jeff Beck, *Truth* [Columbia/Epic, 1968]

been several cleanup sites in this month's transcription, but as the album title proclaims, these tracks are the "Truth."

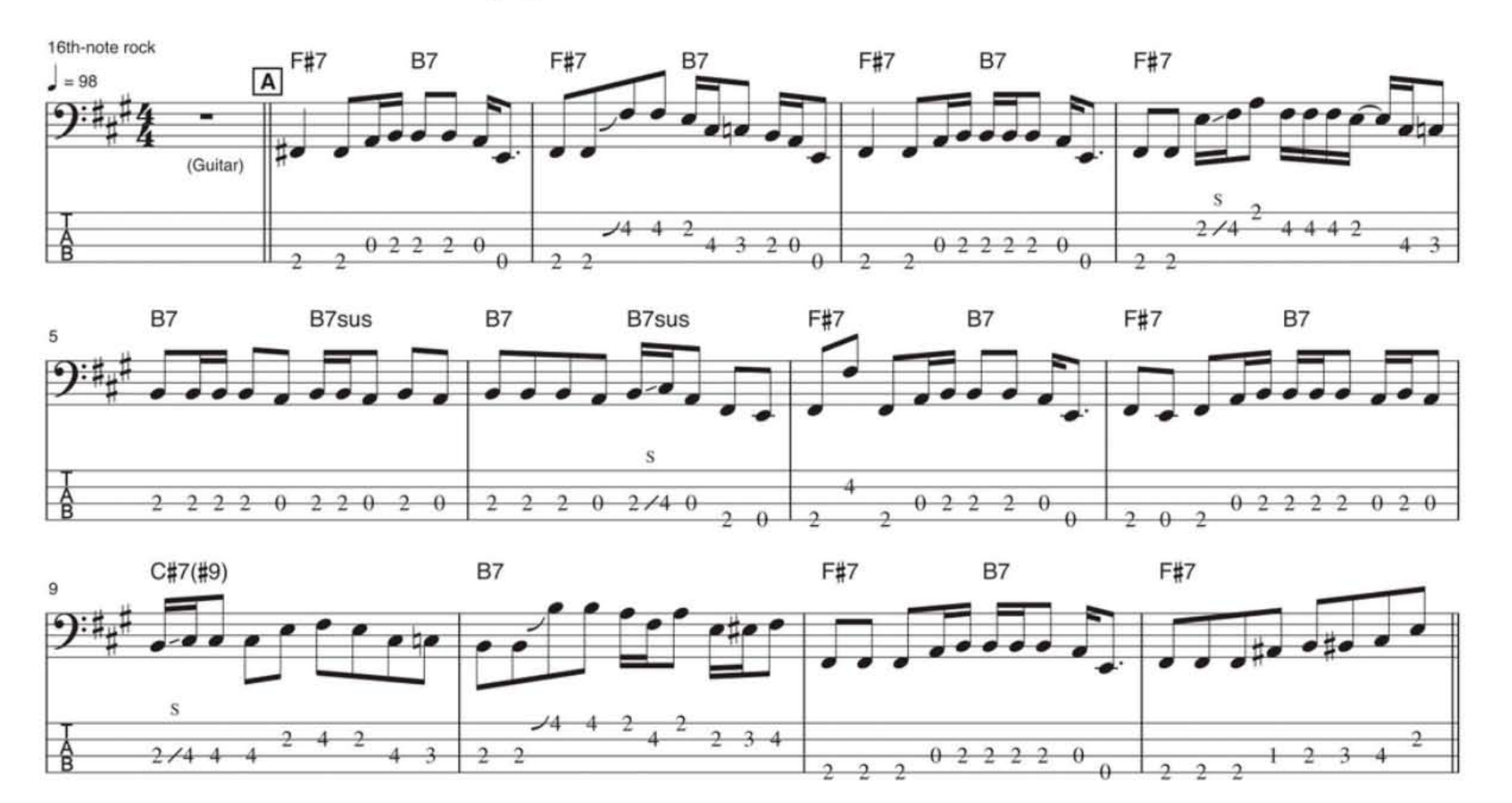
"Let Me Love You," penned by blues bass legend Willie Dixon, is a straightahead 12-bar blues progression, played here in *F♯* with a swinging 16th-note rock feel. The blues scale (1–♭3–4–♯4–5–♭7) in that key offers use of the open *E* and *A* strings, and Wood's line takes full advantage of the position. The first of nine choruses features an authoritative instrumental statement from Beck over the alternating I–IV progression for the first four bars of the blues form, and the bass line comes in blasting a prototypical riff with an accent off the "e" of beat *four* that gets repeated in bars 3, 7, and 11, and echoed throughout the tune. Bar 2 is the first of many slides up to the octave, a tactic that gives the line a loose vibe. In bar 4 Wood sets up the change to the IV chord with a ♭7–5–♯4 (*E–C♯–C*) pattern that seems to be his standard route to the *B7* chord, whether coming from the I chord, or on the way back from the V. In bars 5 and 6, the line alternates between the root (*B*) and ♭7 (*A*), bouncing off the open *A* string with a pattern that gets repeated almost every time he plays that part of the form.

In the second chorus (letter **B**), Rod Stewart's vocals take the lead, and the alternating I–IV movement gives way to a standard "long I" progression for the rest of the piece. Now we start to see the use of call and response between the vocals and band. Bars 13 and 14 accompany the vocals, but then a rapid-fire 16th lick comes in to answer the phrase in bars 15 and 16. Bar 16 introduces a variation of the "Shortening Bread" lick (1–6–5) that is a recurring theme throughout the track; catch the slide up to the *D♯* with the 4th finger. The answer phrase in bar 19 goes up an octave this time, and the slide up from the last *F♯* may have caused the first appearance of the following lick (which sounds like Mountain's "Mississippi Queen") to get hacked up. This lick reappears many times, but this one has an unexpected visit from the open *E* string. It's a quick blip that doesn't cause any real problems, but it's typical of Wood's, um, relaxed approach to the bass. Although he misses the intended destination note (*F♯*), Wood nails it every other time. In bar 22 he takes a quick breath on beat *two*, and then slides into the octave—but the chromatic triplet on *four* is an anomaly. It's more like he dragged the 16th-notes until they almost became a triplet. It's a little against the grain, and he doesn't do it again. The chorus ends with a triumphant retelling of the "MQ" lick, and I suppose he was so happy to hit it, he played it twice again for the answer phrases in the next chorus. Hey, it's a great lick, and he plays it like he's "sprayin' fire, like Godzilla."

The second answer phrase in chorus 3 (letter **C**) brings back the "SB" lick, but he develops it into a two-bar phrase by ending on the octave *F♯* on the "and" of beat *four* (bar 31), and ending the phrase in bar 32 by emphasizing the ♭7 (*E*) of the chord. Beck starts to solo in chorus 4 (**D**), and Wood calms it down with steady eighth-notes in bar 37 and a descending octave jump on beat *one* that serves as a motif for the next four bars. To play the jump from

"Let Me Love You" By Jeff Beck

Transcription by Ed Friedland



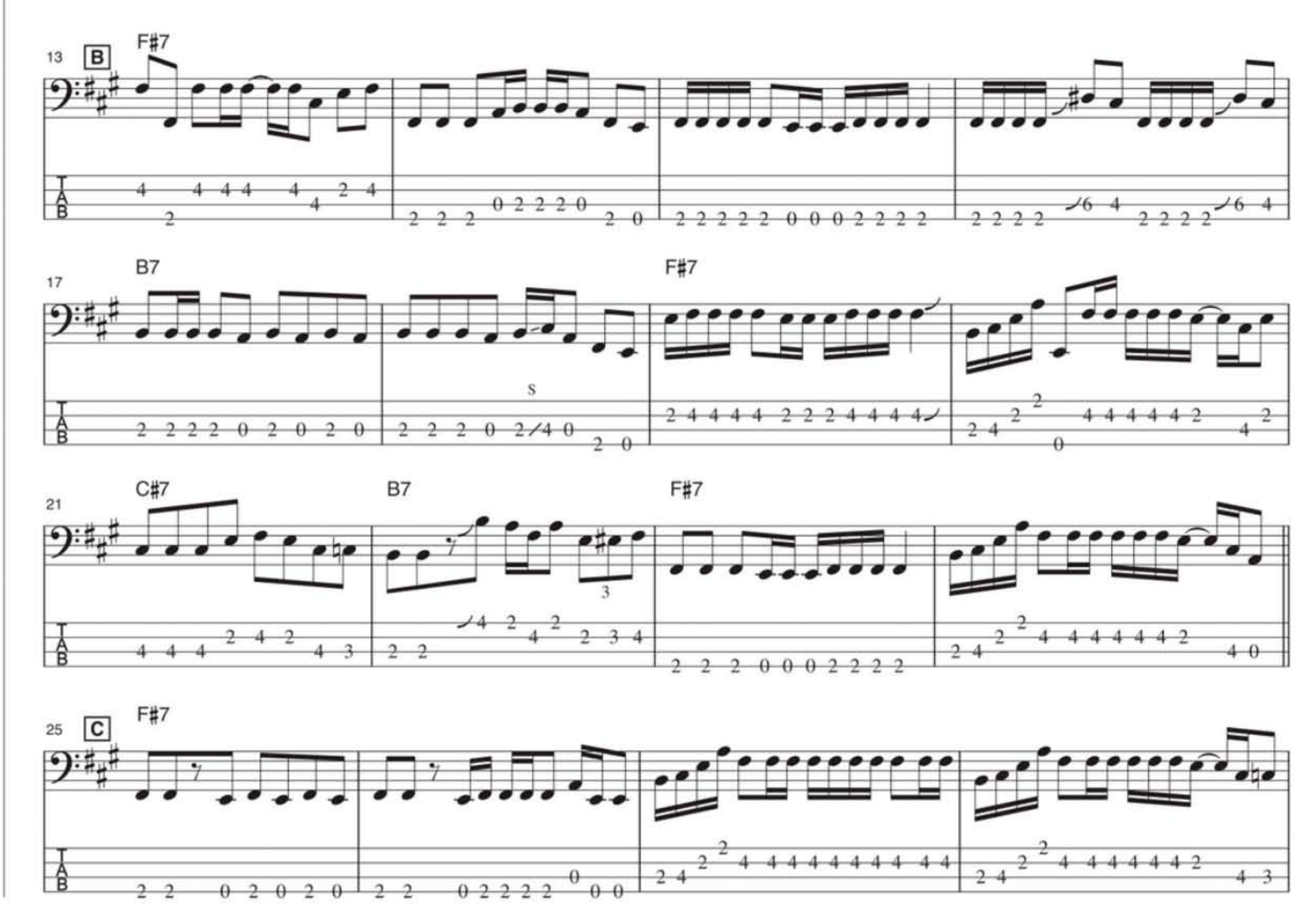
Let Me Love You Baby Words and Music by Willie Dixon. (c) 1961 (Renewed 1989) HOOCHIE COOCHIE MUSIC (BMI)/Administered by BUG MUSIC, INC., A BMG. CHRYSALIS COMPANY. All Rights Reserved. Used by Permission. Reprinted by Permission of Hal Leonard Corporation.

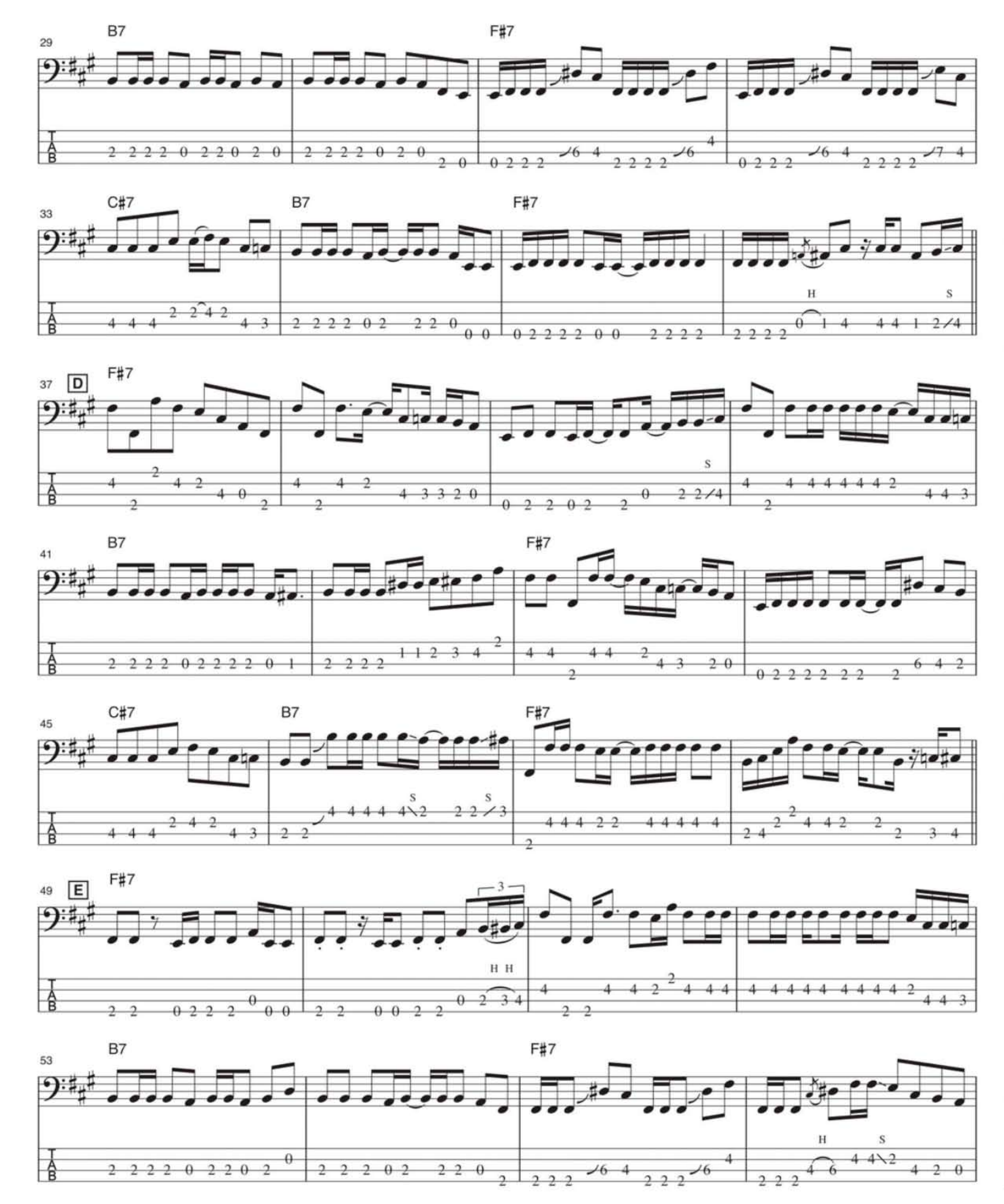
the low *F♯* to the *A* on the *G* string, play the high *A* toward the bottom of the finger; this will help you play it smoother and maintain your hand position.

Ron starts chorus five (letter **E**) with two eighths on the downbeat; it's amazing how effective the rest on beat *two* is at creating some breathing space. He repeats the idea in bar 50, but this time deliberately staccato, and finishes the bar with a chromatic slur that sets up the octave *F♯*. The "SB" lick in bar 55 gets transmuted into a blues riff in bar 56 that has a strong resemblance to the pre-chorus guitar riff from the Rolling Stones' "19th Nervous Breakdown." Slide up to the *D♯* with your pinkie, then slide back from the *F♯* to the *E* with your index finger. In bar 57, Ron pulls up on the *B* with his index finger and then plays the *C♯* with the pinkie—a classic blues guitar bend. Bars 59 and 60 end the chorus with a short "three-against-four" rhythm that creates adequate tension for the release into the next chorus (letter **F**), where Stewart's vocals return.

This time, Wood sets up the "MQ" lick with the slide from the low *F♯* and nails it in bars 63 and 64. On the IV, he ventures up to the *G* string and plays in the higher octave, bringing out a melodic vibe with the *C♯* in bar 66. It's not a big deal, but notice how effective it is to jump register after spending so much time in the basement. The energy chills out again and Wood opens chorus seven with a quote from Duck Dunn's riff on "Hip Hug-Her" by Booker T. & the M.G.'s. It could be a simply happy accident, but most important is to notice how Wood uses space to work with the dynamic level of the arrangement. He pokes his head up above the fray again by sliding up to the high *C♯* in bar 78, but gets in a little trouble on the way down the lick by letting an open *D* and *A* slip through. Not a big problem really, but it was probably not intentional. He plays the V–IV–I chord section using a classic chromatic run from the 3rd to the 5th of the chord, which turns out to be a replica of the classic line from Howlin' Wolf's "Killing Floor." The dynamics drop one more level in chorus eight, and the "Hip Hug-Her" lick sets the vibe. It feels as if the energy is petering out a bit by the time they hit bar 89, and bar 94 sounds almost tentative, when suddenly the drums set up a fill, and Wood unleashes a furious rapid-fire lick with a bluesy bend that brings back the fire for the final chorus. Wood keeps up the dynamics and plays with activity, using the mid-register *F♯* to give the line a lift. The song stops abruptly in bar 106, and Wood sets up the end with an unaccompanied descending blues scale that lets you hear the true tone of the bass. Dig the amp breakup on the *E* string!

When you consider that this track pre-dates Led Zeppelin's arrival on the scene by a year, Ron Wood's playing takes on even greater significance. His aggressive rhythmic approach and fluidity on the neck combine for a kick-ass performance, one that has sent several generations of aspiring rock bassists to the woodshed. **BP**

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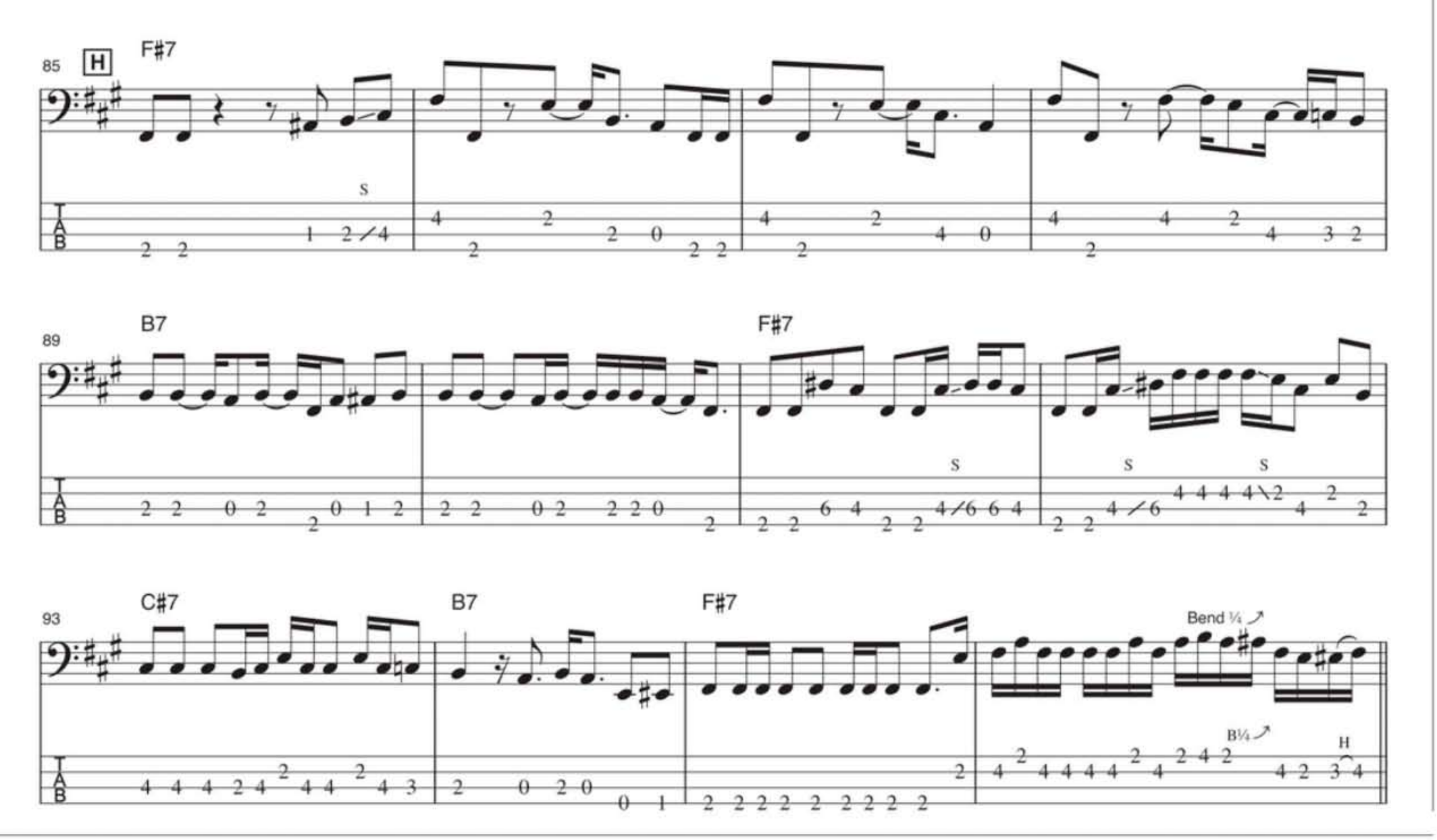
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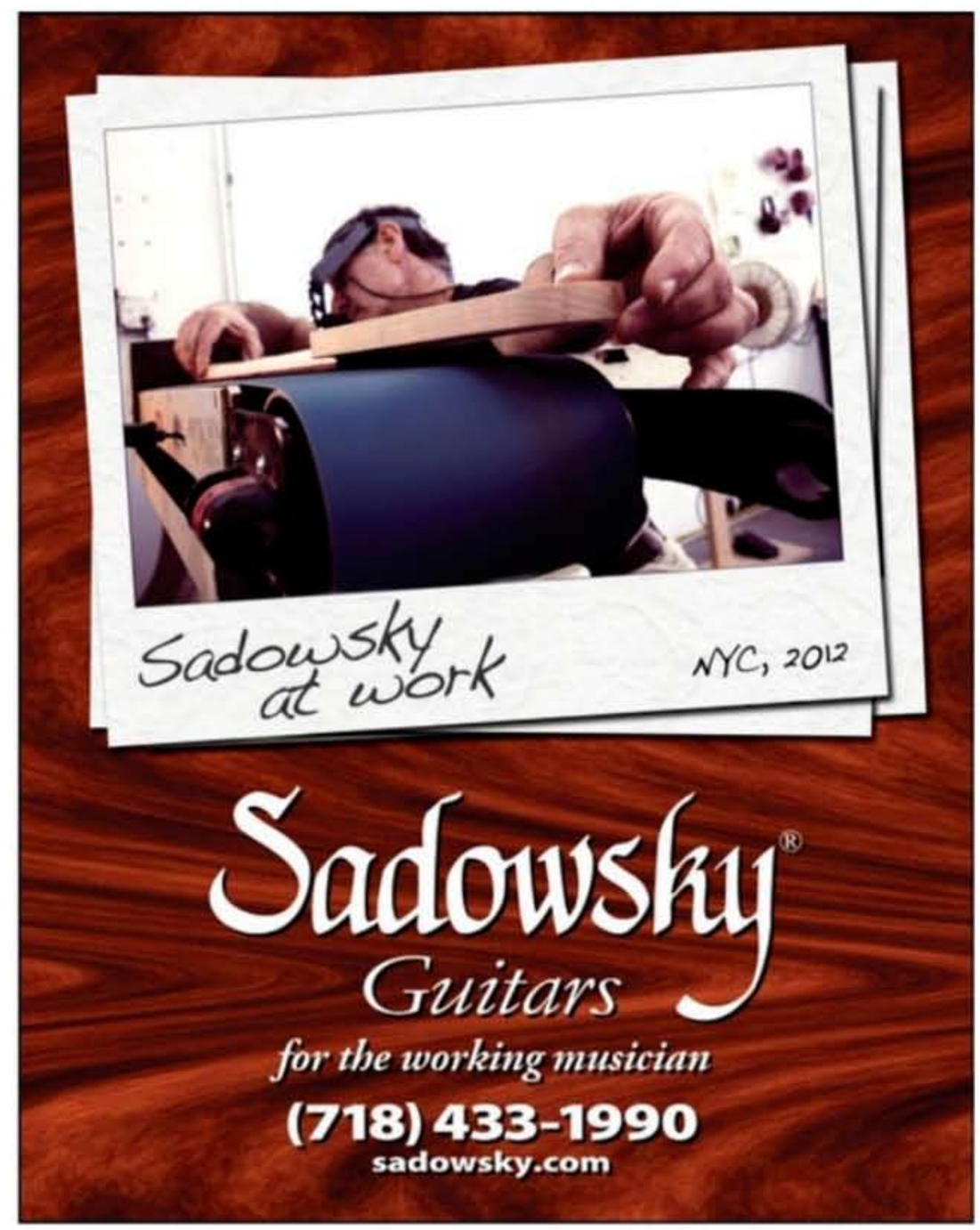
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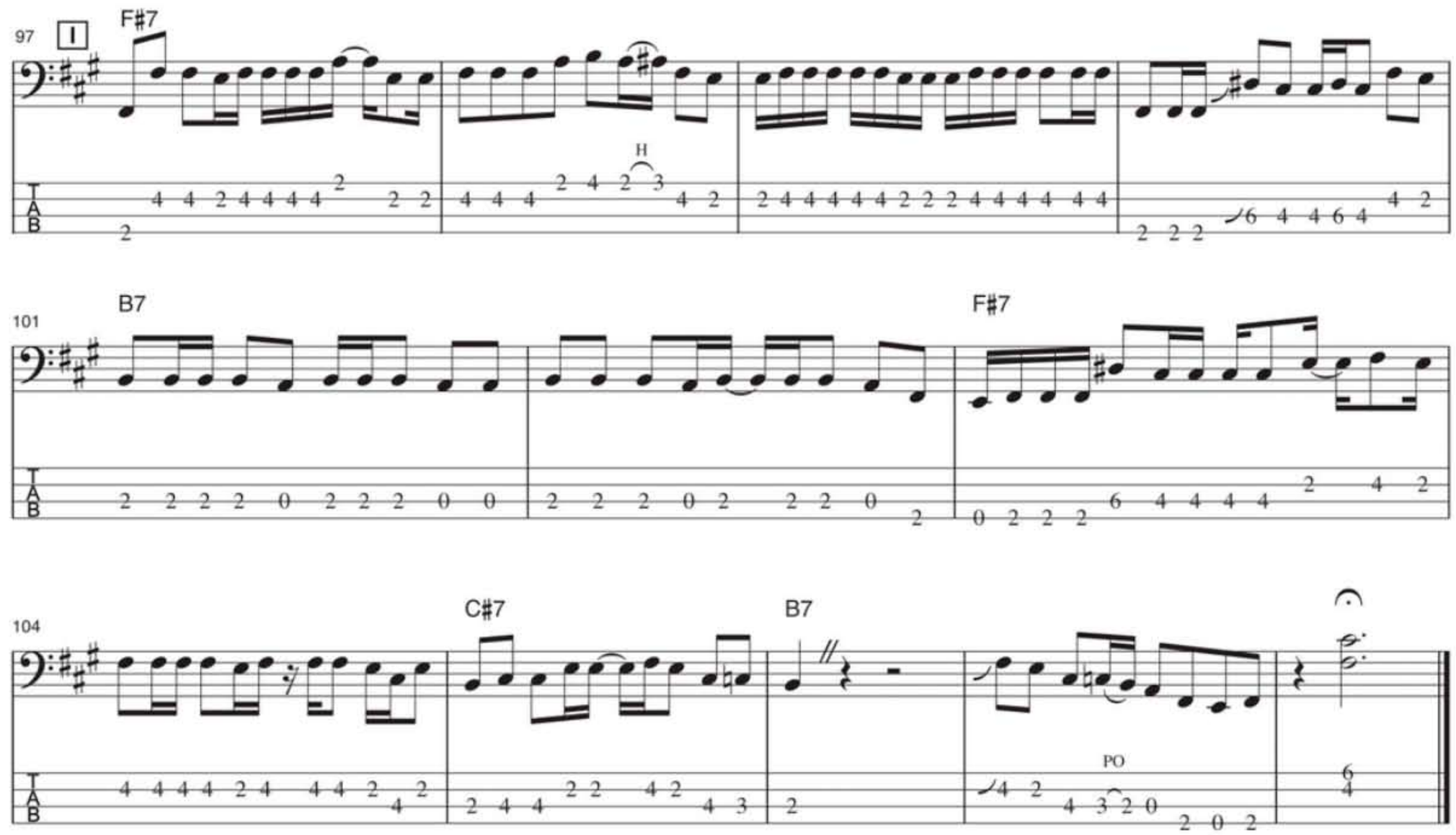
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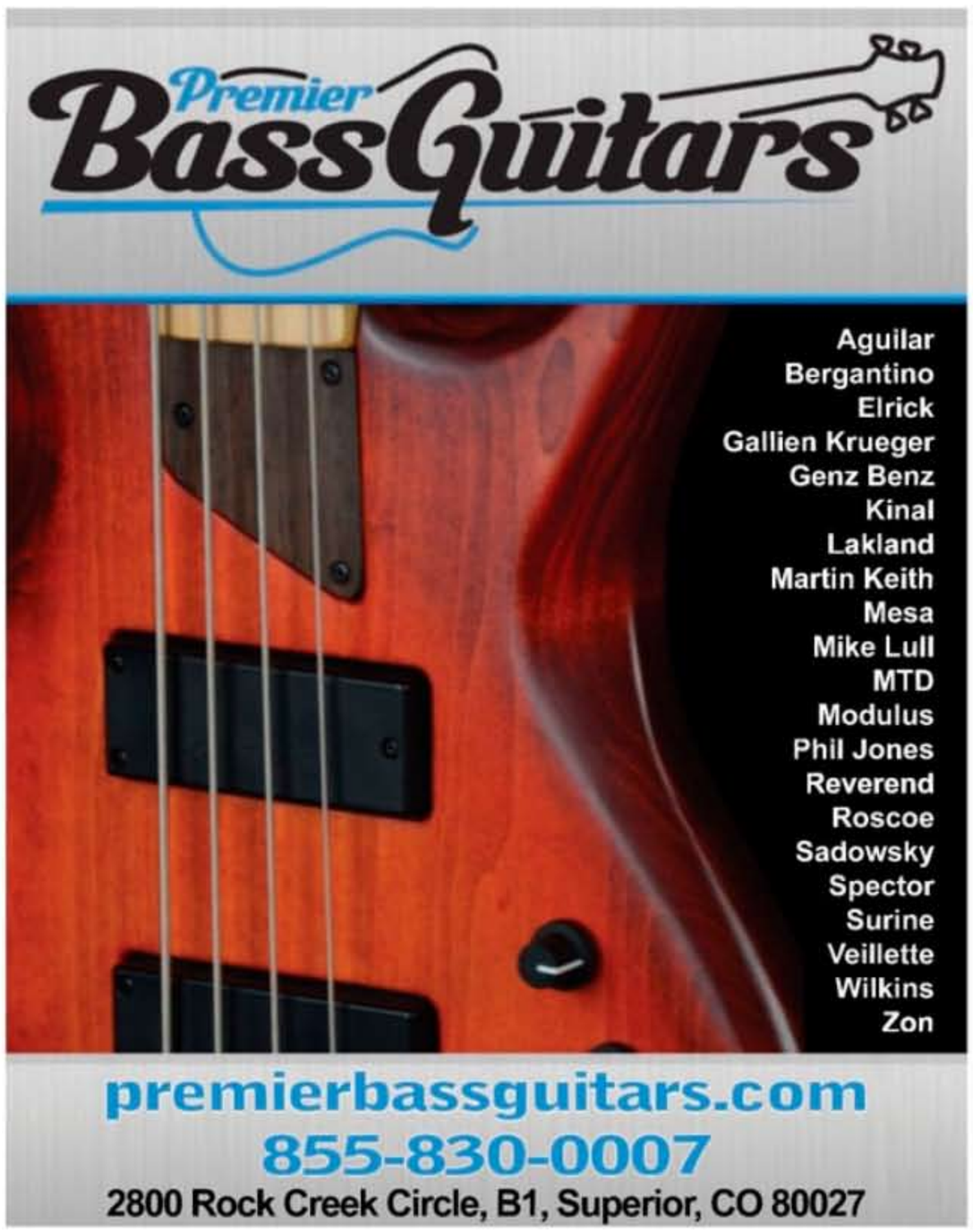
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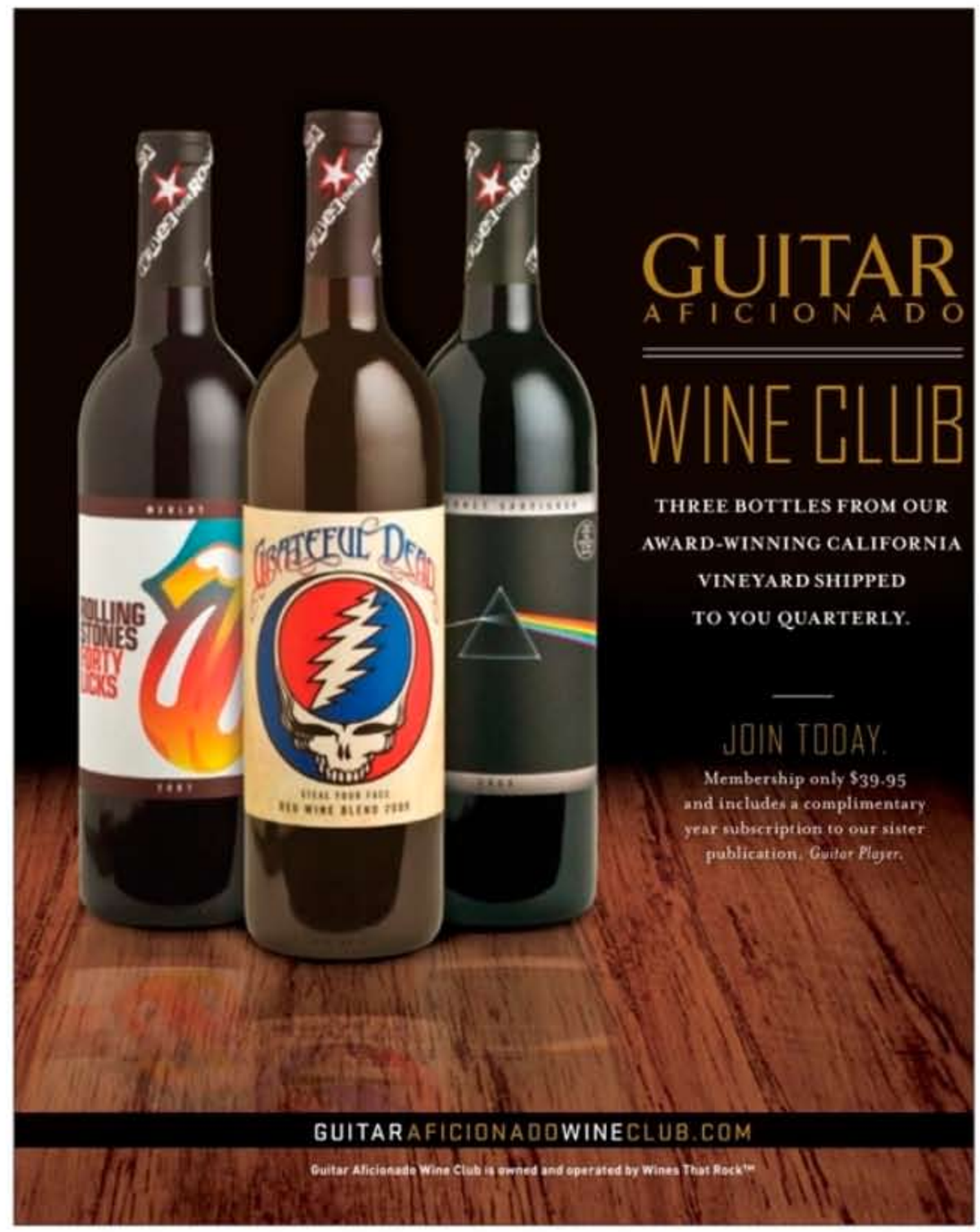
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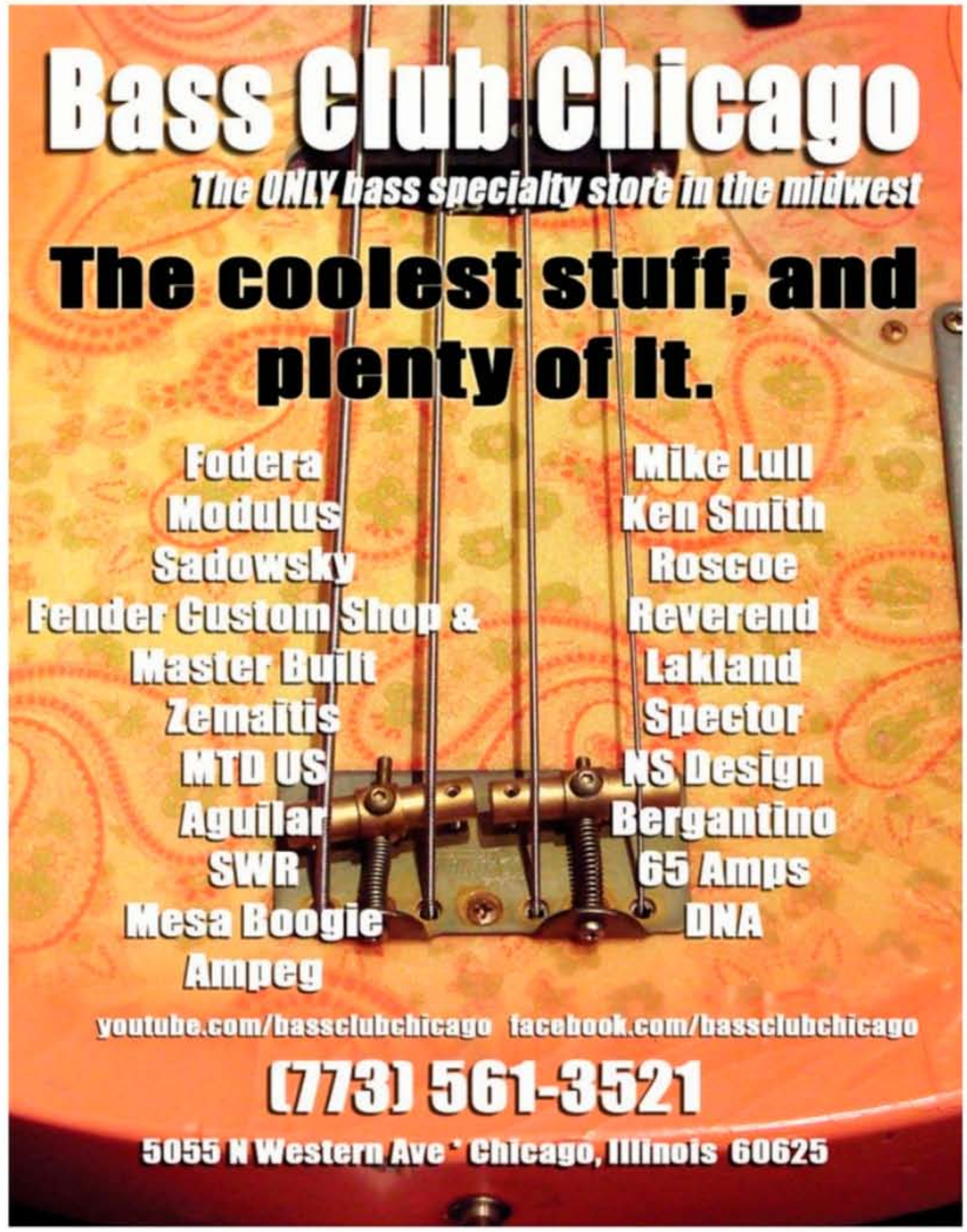

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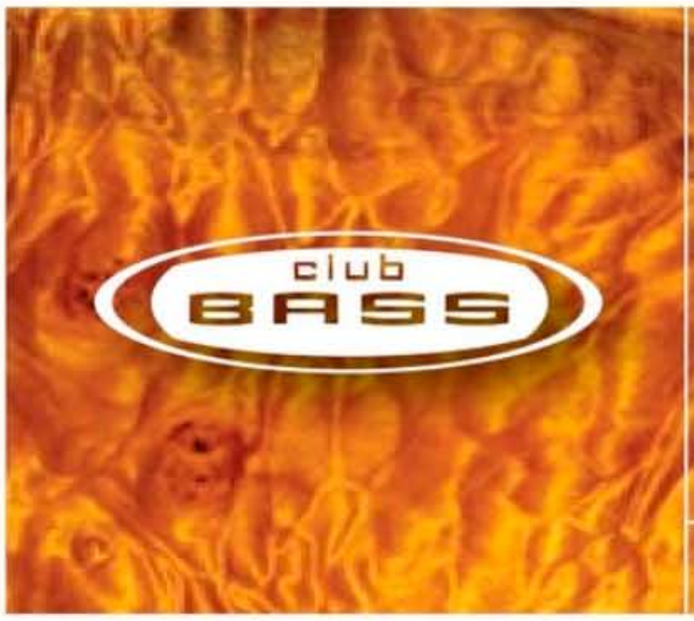

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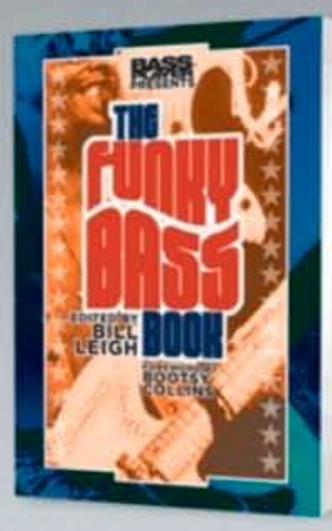

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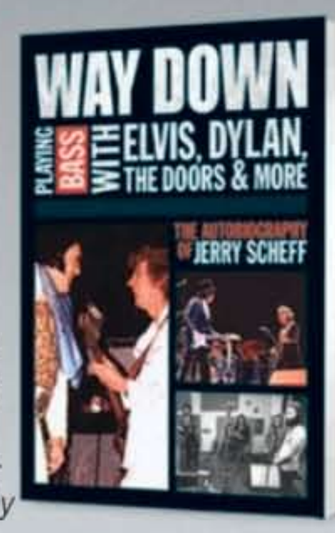

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Over the past 20-plus years with Bass Player, *Art Director and photographer Paul Haggard has accumulated a shelf full of broken cameras and some dusty memories. He will recount some over the next few columns until either he can't remember any more, or they fail to be interesting—whichever comes first.*

OUTTAKES

Photograph from January/February 1992

NEVER, AND I MEAN *NEVER*, ASSUME *ANYTHING*.

Do you know why one should never assume anything? Hmmm? Well, I'll tell you why. Its because it makes an *ass* out of *u* and *me*!

Despite the fact that tomorrow I'm going to really regret having written that line, the following describes a situation in which I made (as I often do) several assumptions in the course of a shoot, all of which proved to be quite wrong.

Karl Coryat and I arrived in Los Angeles one fine day in 1992 with one sole purpose: to interview and photograph Flea, the bassist for the then-ascending funk-rock powerhouse Red Hot Chili Peppers, and whose reputation famously preceded him as a wild, punk-rock nihilist. Several times I had seen him perform onstage with terrifying abandon and was thoroughly expecting to be greeted at the door by a crazed maniac.

First misconception. Flea was not a crazed maniac. Flea lived in a modest yet artfully decorated Hollywood home and proved to be insightful, artistic, and thoughtful. Perfect time to pitch the idea I had come down there with: to shoot him dressed in an elegant suit instead of shirtless, as he is usually seen—a study in contrasts (I did go to art school, y'know.) Flea was agreeable to this and went to change, and my assumption was that all would go to plan, but Flea emerged in a beautiful dark evergreen blazer ... and white cotton briefs.

"Where are the pants?" I asked.

"Oh, I don't have the pants. I lost them somewhere..."

Uh, well okay. So we shot a few with just the blazer, and a few other setups, then I noticed an old tuba lying in a corner which seemed to have been used primarily as an ashtray for some time, and suggested to Flea that he pose with it, seeing as tubas *are* bass instruments after all.

Flea was game and put his lips to the mouthpiece. "Okay, now make a grimace." I instructed.

"What do you mean?"

"You know, like a squinty-face where you're blowing really hard."

Flea gave me an annoyed look . "You mean like I don't know how to play?"

And I *had* assumed he didn't know how to play, but evidently he did, and notwithstanding my callous, and insulting disregard of this potential, he graciously indulged me and made his squinty-face, and I made the photograph and as it turned out we all lived happily ever after, except that he is now a rock god, and I am unfortunately still just an ass. But I do have a pretty boss photo of Flea playing a tuba! —PAUL HAGGARD

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